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THE AMERICAN Legion

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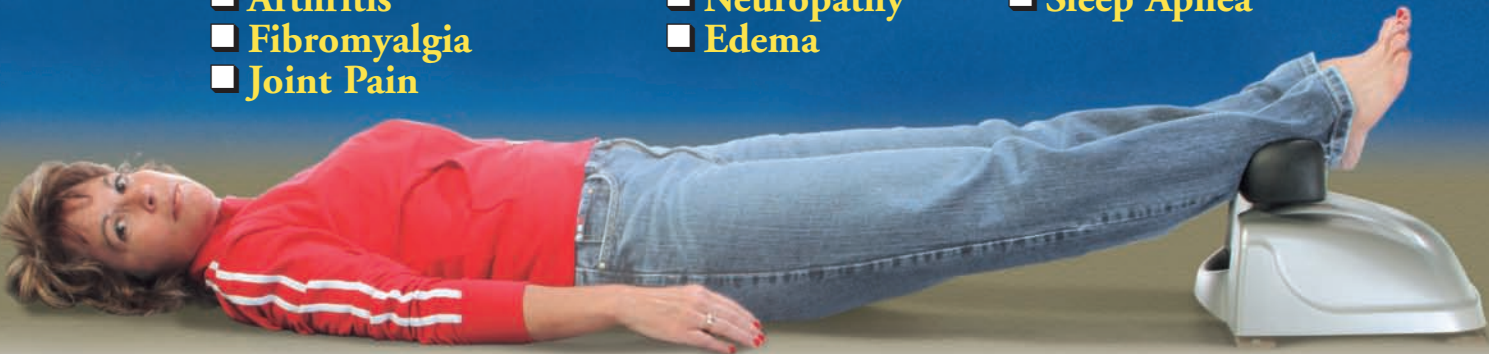
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Legion

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Courtesy Ronald Reagan Library

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The American Legion Magazine, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its 2.7 million members. These wartime veterans, working through 15,000 community-level posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; community service, and the wholesome development of our nation's youth.



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NATIONAL COMMANDER Paul A. Morin
PUBLISHER The American Legion
EDITOR John Raughter
OPERATIONS ADMINISTRATOR Patricia Marschand

MANAGING EDITOR Jeff Stoffer
SENIOR EDITOR Steve Brooks
ASSISTANT EDITORS Brandy Ballenger
James V. Carroll
Matt Grills
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR Alan W. Dowd
ART DIRECTOR Holly K. Soria
DESIGNER Matt Everett

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR Jon Reynolds
SENIOR GRAPHIC DESIGNER King Dosssee

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ADVERTISING

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR Diane Andretti
ADVERTISING ASSISTANTS Laura Edwards
Amanda A. Harpenau
CONTACT (317) 630-1282
(317) 630-1283
The American Legion Magazine
P.O. Box 7068
Indianapolis, IN 46207
ADVERTISING SALES James G. Elliott
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'Spirit of Victory'

Thank God for the "Spirit of Victory" article (November). There seems to be a lack of gratitude on the part of so many for the price that has been paid, and is still being paid, for the freedoms we enjoy.

Here in northern California, we still have a number of World War II veterans who stand together with our Vietnam, Korean, Persian Gulf and all other war veterans. We have become a close-knit group that appreciates the number of things being done to show gratitude for our years of service in the military.

How very true the statement on the cover: "This country does not forget God or the soldier. Upon now we both depend," John F. Kennedy, 1962. Thank you for honoring God and the soldiers who are committed to keeping us a free nation.

– Pastor Royal Blue, Redding, Calif.

'Who Should Vets Support?'

It was rather disturbing to me to see an article by Hillary Rodham Clinton (November). As I recall, there was a combined effort to downplay the military during the Clinton administration. In fact, there was more than one article in the papers that said military personnel were not to wear their uniforms while on White House duty. The indication was that the Clintons held the military in contempt.

Now, for political reasons, Clinton is saying she and the Democrats will support our veterans. As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, she has been in a position to do many of the things she proposes in her article.

She and her husband were in charge for eight years; where are the programs they

presented to help the veterans? Having served during three wars, I find it very offensive to see this magazine publish an article by someone with such low credibility.

– Phil Allison,
Colorado Springs, Colo.

Sen. Hillary Clinton says Democrats "will work every day to honor the service and sacrifice of America's veterans." That promise is merely a statement of the duty of all responsible U.S. citizens. Nothing suggests Democrats will develop, present or even support when proposed by others any program that will move forward, and fund, a successful conclusion to the global war on terrorism or, more immediately, the conflict in Iraq.

Instead, Democrats keep up a constant whine that the war on

terrorism is too costly, is badly managed and is a mistake of enormous proportions. All the time, however, neither Clinton nor any other nationally recognized Democrat have offered any alternative ideas for victory. Sadly, they have been content to propose surrender and evacuation as the proper course for concluding the conflict in Iraq, and by implication, the entire war on terrorism.

Contrary to her assertion that “the best way to defend America is to honor those who have stood on the first lines in our defense,” I propose instead that we should defend America by supporting our troops with our hearts and with our will, with our best plans and with our money. By giving our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines appropriate and well-defined objectives, by supplying them with the proper equipment and weapons to allow them to efficiently accomplish their tasks, and by deploying them in appropriately overwhelming numbers, we will limit casualties and effectively move toward peace and security.

– James F. Blackstock,
Brentwood, Tenn.

I am getting tired of bureaucrats like Sen. Larry Craig implying that only Republicans have “respect for hard work, love of country, duty to our fellow men and women, respect for others and belief in God.” Love of all those qualities is not the purview of any political party – Republican, Democrat or independent.

I am one of eight sons. All of us proudly served in the military during World War II, Korea and Vietnam. When it comes to politics, we cover the whole spectrum. But one common thread transcends our differences: we are Americans.

When “Taps” is sounded and the good Lord calls us home, He will tally our pluses and minuses. I guarantee party affiliation will not be considered, but sowing discord among His children might be.

– Arthur Koszoru, Aberdeen, Md.

I don’t know the Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton who wrote “Why Veterans Should Elect Democrats.” What was written is completely the opposite of what Clinton and many Democrats have been saying publicly for years. Her claims of support for the brave men and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan are the exact opposite of the surrender Democrats propose by giving the enemy a timetable for U.S. withdrawal.

Clinton’s harsh criticism of President Bush does nothing but give aid and comfort to the enemy, who watch and listen to U.S. news on radio and television. The more people like Clinton speak against our commander in chief the more the terrorists are encouraged.

During my service in Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh said, “We cannot win on the battlefield, but we are winning on the streets and in the newspapers in the United States. Americans will grow tired of the war and eventually leave.” That’s exactly what happened in Vietnam, and that’s what will happen in the Middle East.

How can Clinton say House Democrats have been working to support our troops when each day they bash the president and call for withdrawal (another word for “surrender”)? Leaving Iraq before it is secure will only lead to the creation of a radical Islamic state that will be a base for terrorism throughout the world.

When we are attacked again, Clinton and the Democrats will

be the first to blame President Bush and the military, claiming they didn’t do enough to keep us safe.

– Thomas J. Lienhard, Westfield, N.J.

While I am a registered Republican, I am not a blind follower. I support the candidate I think supports veterans. While both sides of the aisle have used veterans as a pawn in their never-ending bickering, I find Sen. Hillary Clinton’s comments to particularly ring hollow. She claims to have nothing but respect for veterans and thinks of all the veterans she has met while first lady and now as a senator.

To learn her true opinion of veterans, all one has to do is ask any military member who served in the White House or on Air Force or Marine One during her husband’s administration. She expressed nothing but contempt for military personnel serving in those billets and frequently expressed it.

Now she needs veteran votes, and as any true politician she claims great respect for their service and says she considers it “truly inspiring.” While saying veterans issues should be non-partisan, she spends her entire article on partisan politics. We all know she is laying the ground work for her 2008 presidential run.

It’s time for Sen. Clinton to come clean.

– Santo Polizzi, Alexandria, Va.

I was disgusted to see that Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton was chosen to speak for Democrats. She certainly spoke of all the wonderful things she has done for veterans. What she left out is the fact that she voted against the flag amendment when one vote would have passed it. That puts her in the

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same category as our two senators from Massachusetts who also voted no.

Of course they will all tell you it was for the good of the country. I am not sure what country they mean.

— Chuck Large, Stoughton, Mass.

Sen. Hillary Clinton makes her plea by saying that doing right by veterans “is not a Democrat or Republican issue. It is a matter of America’s values and our moral duty” that goes to the very heart of our political problems and of those we elect. It is sad that politicians of both parties choose to vote along party lines or in favor of special interest groups that heap money and gifts on them.

Let’s all try to make America better and vote for people who care about America more than their own bank accounts. Every elected official who takes special-interest money, or who approves special trips in the guise of helping us, or who votes to enrich himself instead of this nation, should not be forgiven but removed from office.

— Daryl Tisinger, Simi Valley, Calif.

‘A Marriage Made in Hell’

Building two hospitals adjacent to each other would certainly have advantages. However, I do have a problem understanding some of the verbiage. Sharing “big-ticket” items makes sense if those items have significant idle time servicing only one facility. But a “sharing agreement” to save money on parking, laundry, food and maintenance? How does one share a parking space? Allow only sub-compact

cars to accommodate two vehicles in one parking space, or restrict one facility to day parking and the other facility to night parking? Are there plans to put two people in one bed, thereby reducing the inventory of sheets and pillow cases? How does one share food and food-preparation facilities? Are you suggesting putting patients on half rations, or serving food on a split-shift basis? How much money would be saved by purchasing larger coffee pots and larger soup kettles?

I am equally confused by sharing agreements on maintenance. Doubling the floor space would realistically require twice the number of mops. And how does one save money by sharing light bulbs or buckets of paint?

Shared facilities should save money, but please do not use a Washington-style bureaucratic argument to justify a decision.

— Ray Essig, Katy, Texas

I read with great interest the article by Jeff Stoffer. I am pleased to read that greatness is rising from the ruins.

I happened across a November 2006 copy while I was making my rounds at the Thomas E. Creek VA Medical Center here in Amarillo, Texas. The picture of the front of Charity Hospital caught my eye as I was flipping through the pages. I know that place well. I watched it for over a week from across the street at the New Orleans VA. I was there with many other VA police officers.

VA police officers volunteered from all across the United States to pull a tour of duty to “hold and

protect the assets and dignity of the New Orleans VA Hospital.” We did, and with the utmost professionalism and pride.

My tour came around less than a year after serving a 16-month extended tour of duty in Iraq. Going to New Orleans was somewhat therapeutic, believe it or not, even though living conditions were worse than a few of the places I had seen in Iraq. It was back to bathing in plastic tubs, sweating incessantly, living off of MREs, dehydrated coffee, and grabbing 3- to 4-hour naps instead of real sleep. We did our jobs, and we did them well.

But that isn’t the source of the burr under my saddle. What caught my eye was in the third paragraph, where the article states, “... Department of Veterans Affairs, which also lost its downtown hospital to Katrina ...” We didn’t lose anything down there. We held our ground, and we accomplished our mission.

In the aftermath, decisions may have been made on paper, but to say we “lost” the VA would be to tread on the honor of many great VA police officers who answered that particular call.

— Sgt. Jason A. Huff, Amarillo, Texas

Ready to ride

I am glad to see articles about Legion Riders going to Salt Lake City. I have been riding my Triumph motorcycle to “Rolling Thunder” in Washington every year on Memorial Day, wearing my American Legion Riders shirt while among 600,000 bikes from all over.

I will try to make the ride to Reno next year.

— T. Rod Reynolds, Columbus, Ohio

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Congress must fulfill its promises

Throughout the 2006 election campaign, Americans frequently heard about the need for change. Now it's time to govern. Those who won seats in the 110th Congress need to remember their promises. The party of FDR and JFK, now in the majority, can effect changes long advocated by The American Legion and U.S. veterans.

One important way the new Congress can demonstrate its seriousness about change is to deliver, in concrete ways, real support for our nation's veterans and those now serving in harm's way. Veterans and soldiers alike often hear platitudes from elected officials at ceremonies and observances. The words are appreciated, but they ring hollow when veterans are forced to wait months for doctor's appointments at overcrowded VA hospitals, when soldiers must rummage through junk piles to find armor for their Humvees, and when lawyers are given a blank check to sue America out of its values.

Generally speaking, it's time for Congress to walk the talk. The commander in chief is equally obligated to sign veteran-friendly legislation that appears on his desk. Specifically, it's time to:

■ **Stop charging GI Bill enrollment fees.** Currently active-duty personnel pay \$1,200 up front. Enrollment should be automatic, and the 10-year deadline for using the benefit should be lifted. A 21st-century GI Bill, one that's fair and just to the National Guard, reserves, and active duty alike, must be crafted and passed.

■ **Take care of our troops.** Americans fighting the war on terrorism must be sufficiently equipped, armed and deployed in numbers adequate to fulfill their mission. Their families at home should enjoy a quality of life that mirrors their commitment to our nation. Military pay continues to lag behind the private sector, and when a soldier is so wounded in battle as to lose a limb or suffer a traumatic brain injury, combat pay should neither be forfeited nor charged retroactively to the wounded warrior.

■ **Eliminate the disabled veterans tax.** Congress must pass full concurrent receipt and stop making any military retiree forfeit his or her pension through lost disability compensation.

■ **Pass mandatory funding for VA.** VA needs a mandatory funding formula for its health-care system. Overdue hospital and clinic construction projects remain only in blueprints, veterans are lined up to see overbooked doctors, and emergency rooms are cutting back hours for one reason: a failure to fund the services promised by Congress. VA must also be authorized to bill Medicare.

■ **Open VA's doors to all veterans.** The suspension of Priority Group 8 veterans from the VA health-care system must be lifted, restoring the spirit and intent of the Veterans Health Care Eligibility Act of 1996.

■ **Protect the flag.** It's time for Congress to correct one of the Supreme Court's greatest errors and pass a constitutional amendment.

A nation at war cannot ignore for another congressional session the needs of our military personnel, our veterans and their families. Those who won seats in Congress last fall spoke often of that principle. Promises were made. Now it's time for action.



National Commander
Paul A. Morin

MEMORANDA

CONSOLIDATED POST

REPORTS: New incentives have been in place to increase the number of Consolidated Post Reports returned to National Headquarters this year. National Commander Paul A. Morin has issued a challenge similar to the National Emergency Fund Commander's Challenge for the six categories of departments based on size. Under the incentive program:

■ Top performing department commanders will receive plaques at the National Convention.

■ Certificates will be given to 98-percent to 100-percent district commanders.

■ The national commander will write a letter to departments citing the departments' success stories.

■ National vice commanders will emphasize the importance in their calls to district commanders and during department visits.

MEMBERSHIP: The National Membership & Post Activities Committee planning session is Jan. 5-6 in Indianapolis.

For more information, contact the Internal Affairs division at National Headquarters.

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OPPOSE

**Rep. Raul M. Grijalva,
D-Ariz.**

■ Grijalva's district includes more than 300 miles of U.S.-Mexico border.

Ronald Reagan once said, "This country has lost control of its borders, and no country can sustain that kind of position." That is especially true in a post-9/11 world in which our top intelligence agencies worry about terrorists slipping across our porous border with a weapon of mass destruction. Border security is national security.

Part of the solution must include physical barriers, fences, more border patrols and cutting-edge technology that lets us know when and where the border has been breached – a sort of virtual fence. In San Diego, a 14-mile stretch of fencing turned a flood of illegal immigration into a trickle. In fact, one of the reasons Arizona's illegal immigration problem is so bad is the success of the San Diego fence in pushing illegal crossers east.

Many of these security measures, including more than 700 miles of fencing, have been included in recent legislation and signed into law by President Bush. Some say the cost of building these fences is too great. I disagree. Even at several billion dollars, they are a bargain when you consider what illegal immigration is costing and what a weapon of mass destruction would do.

Some on the left complain that it would amount to building our own Berlin Wall. That is nonsense. The Berlin Wall turned citizens into prisoners; a security fence along our border will keep people from entering illegally. It's the difference between prison bars and the bars that people put over their windows to guard against break-ins. A border fence would have more in common with the fence the Israelis have built, which has been very successful in keeping out terrorists.

Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, sympathizers of illegal immigration continue to claim that sealing the border is not feasible. They are wrong. Not only can we do it, we must do it.

The proposal for a border wall is due to an utter failure of leadership to comprehensively address immigration in a realistic and lasting way.

As a country we know that our immigration policies have been stagnant for 20 years and need to be updated. We must have a solution that improves border security, regularizes legal immigration by creating a guest-worker program that protects both employee and

employer, establishes a path to legalization to realistically address those already in our country, and addresses foreign policy. A failure to include all aspects will allow the current crisis to continue. A wall, providing symbolic comfort to some, will not address real issues that require compromise and leadership.

Building a 730-mile wall between us and Mexico will not work. It will only continue to add to a failed enforcement-only approach. Not only will it not keep people from immigrating, it will be a budget-busting endeavor. Congress' proposal is estimated to have an initial cost of \$6.6 billion. This amount should instead be used to implement the 9/11 recommendations on security.

The construction of this wall would devastate the deserts of the Southwest, harming unique national treasures. Building a wall along the border will be impossible in places, and will cut off important migratory routes for wildlife and mar the landscape for hundreds of miles. Professional land managers have expressed concern in congressional hearings about the negative impacts to the environment and wildlife that a border wall might cause.

Instead of working hard to address the border question, debate in Congress is dominated by a minority of nay-sayers who promote anti-immigrant propaganda. A wall will not address larger issues at hand that are in dire need of a solution.

THE HEART OF THE ISSUE

The Bush administration plans a security fence on the U.S.-Mexico border. Critics call the proposal ineffective and inhumane.

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The Arts of War

Workshop offers disabled veterans their place in the spotlight.

BY JOHN RAUGHTER

Legion
14
1/2007

A group of disabled veterans are performing on a stage. In the foreground, a man in a wheelchair is being pushed by a woman. To his right, a woman in a yellow shirt and patterned skirt is dancing with her arms outstretched. Behind them, several other people are standing and singing or shouting with their mouths open. The background is dark, and the stage is lit with warm, yellow light.

Students at a writers program of the National Theatre Workshop for the Handicapped sing and dance before a live audience in Belfast, Maine. *Carl Walsh*

Belfast, Maine, is 5,649 miles from Baghdad, Iraq, but for Trueman Muhrer-Irwin – at least for a few moments in the spotlight of a theatrical stage – he was back where it happened. Back where he lost his best friend and nearly lost his left foot to a roadside bomb.

“I mean, we’re talking the full explosion of color, not a cloud in the sky and that perfect breeze,” he told a mesmerized audience at the National Theatre Workshop for the Handicapped, or NTWH. “It was so calm and so peaceful, but all I could think about was how he died, the dust and the blood and that ... that ringing in my ears. I can still smell the burning flesh, and I keep hearing him asking me if he could ride shotgun ... if he could take my place. I see his face every day and I ask myself, ‘Why? Why am I so ... lucky?’ I left him there dying in that filthy street, bleeding out into a gutter while I sat 10 feet away worrying about my foot.”

Muhrer-Irwin is one of a couple dozen veterans who came to the wooded coastal New England town last summer to participate in the workshop’s “Wounded Warriors” writing program. While writing may have been the craft they were honing, the experience encompassed far more than composing drafts at a computer. Think of the Broadway play “Fame” – dancing, singing, writing, acting.

“It’s not just writing in your head,” said John Spalla, musical director and dean of NTWH. “It’s writing for the stage. It’s not just meant to be read. It’s meant to be communicated to other people. It’s meant to be shared with other people. So we try to give them a taste of what that means – what it is to get up in front of people and be able to feel that connection with the audience, because writers often write in isolation, and isolation often happens with people who are disabled.”

That taste may include participating in a Cole Porter song-and-dance or reading a self-written monologue on stage. The founder of the workshop, Jesuit Brother Rick Curry, remembers the rejection he experienced when trying to audition for a mouthwash commercial almost 30 years ago.

Born without a right forearm, Curry told *People* magazine that the receptionist just burst out laughing when she saw him.



Musical director John Spalla leads the workshop in a rehearsal of Cole Porter’s “Another Opening, Another Show” from “Kiss Me, Kate.” *John Raughter*

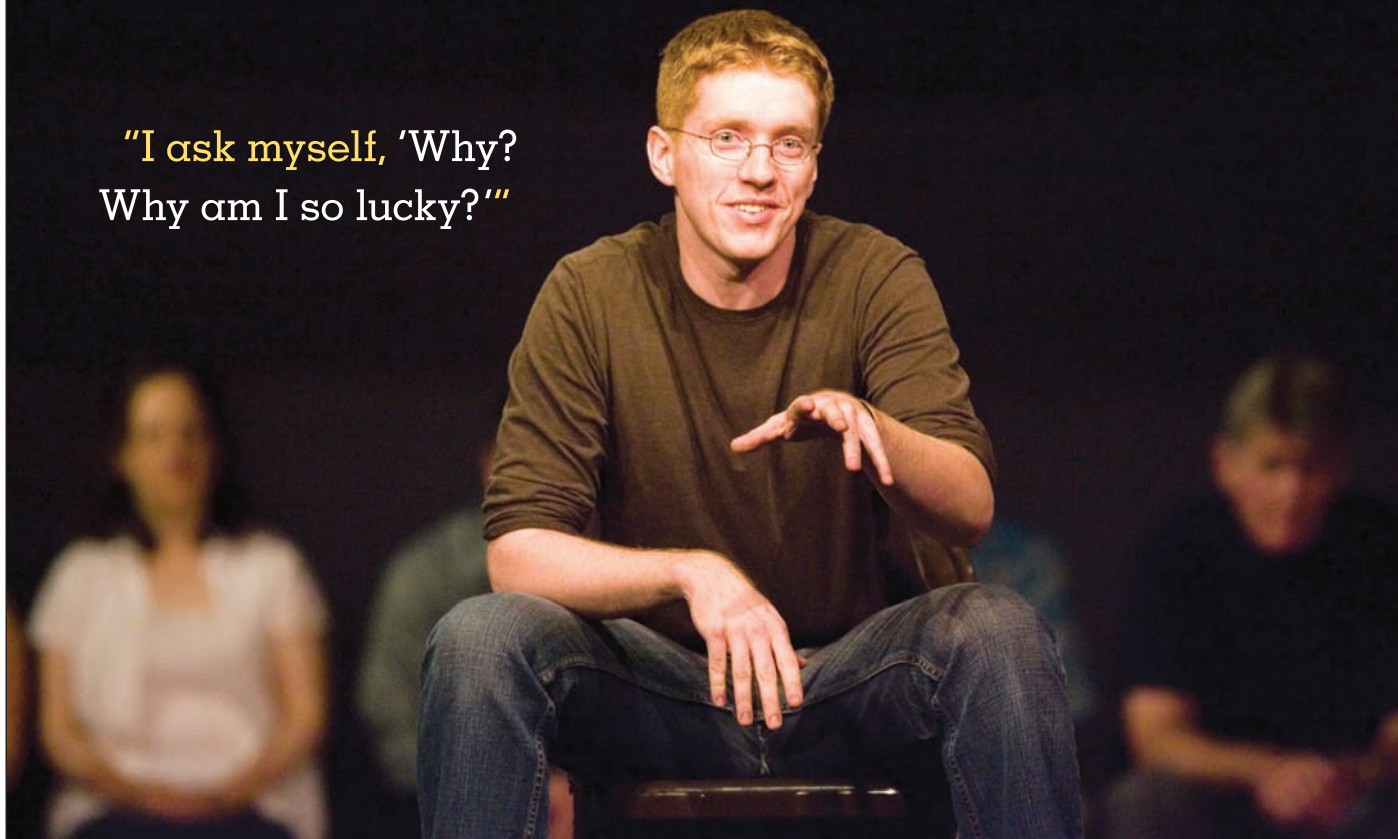
“The thing that annoys me about the able-bodied world looking at disabilities is that they think we are sick. We are disabled, not sick,” he said. “Therefore, they are really not wounded warriors. They are permanently disabled adults, and that is the world we are going to be embracing. If we don’t embrace it, we are going to be in conflict.”

Although NTWH has been around since 1977, last summer marked the first two classes of the 10-day “Wounded Warrior” sessions. Headquartered in New York, the nonprofit organization provides tuition-free scholarships to veterans whose military service runs the gamut from Vietnam to current day.

“A couple of the warriors came here just to write and wound up wanting to read their own piece and wanting to learn how to become actors,” Curry said. “And it’s not just to become entertainers, which I think is the least of it. It’s really another means of communicating and giving them the kind of self confidence they need to wage the battle out there in the real world right now.”

The writing is nothing new for Muhrer-Irwin, 23, whose blogs about his experience as a Florida National Guardsman are found under the pseudonym “Rebel Coyote” at <http://rebelcoyote.livejournal.com/>. His entry shortly after the death of fellow Guardsman Robert

"I ask myself, 'Why?
Why am I so lucky?'"



Wise and the explosion that earned Muhrer-Irwin a 20-percent disability rating is particularly compelling: "When I woke up I didn't feel any pain, a general came and saw me and gave me a 1st AD brigade coin. I was gonna be back in the States in a week, and I found out that the guy I'd spent the last nine months getting to know better than anyone else died of massive head trauma while I was in surgery. He'll be buried at Arlington National Cemetery next week."

Not all wounded warriors are combat veterans. Until Ronda Acres points to the 5-inch platform boot that she wears on her right foot, few people notice the former Army lieutenant is disabled. "People often ask what's wrong with me and I tell them, 'Nothing,'" Acres said. "I'll also point to my leg and say this is what happens when you don't wear seat belts." A member of American Legion Post 139 in Fairland, Okla., Acres was medically discharged in 1982 after a car accident put her in a coma for a few weeks and claimed part of her leg.

"I have never been a singer or a dancer, but I always liked to write," Acres said. "I don't know what to expect, but the people here I am

Florida National Guard veteran Trueman Muhrer-Irwin shares an Iraq war experience on stage during an NTWH performance. *Carl Walsh*

sure are going to show me the proper way to do things."

"The arts are a catharsis for me," added Paul Nyerick, a 100-percent service-connected disabled Marine who served as a forward observer in Vietnam. "I'm a poet and am grateful for this opportunity to write and put closure on a story that I have wanted to tell for so many years."

Curry said he believes the opportunities of "Wounded Warriors" also benefit the school – and more importantly, the arts. He hopes to see the program grow. "We need them. We need to hear their voices," he said. "I think the overwhelming majority of the people in the military don't think of themselves as theatrically talented or even that they are artists, but they are, because artists are givers, and certainly people in the

military are givers. We need them. We need to hear from them." 🌿

John Raughter is editor of The American Legion Magazine.

2007 sessions scheduled

The National Theatre Workshop for the Handicapped is a nonprofit organization that runs primarily on donations. NTWH will offer three writing sessions for veterans in 2007: April 16-25, July 7-17 and July 22-31.

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THE REAGAN

DID HE OR DIDN'T HE

BY PETER SCHWEIZER

The Irish have a saying: failure is an orphan, but success has many fathers.

Nowhere is that more true, perhaps, than in the world of politics. One of the great successes of the 20th century was the defeat of the Soviet Union. Like a house of cards, the Evil Empire came crashing down, without a shot fired. And as one might expect, in the years that have followed, everyone is stepping forward to take credit.

DID.

Now, 15 years after the collapse of the Soviet edifice, with a slew of formerly top-secret documents now available from both sides, the evidence is very clear:

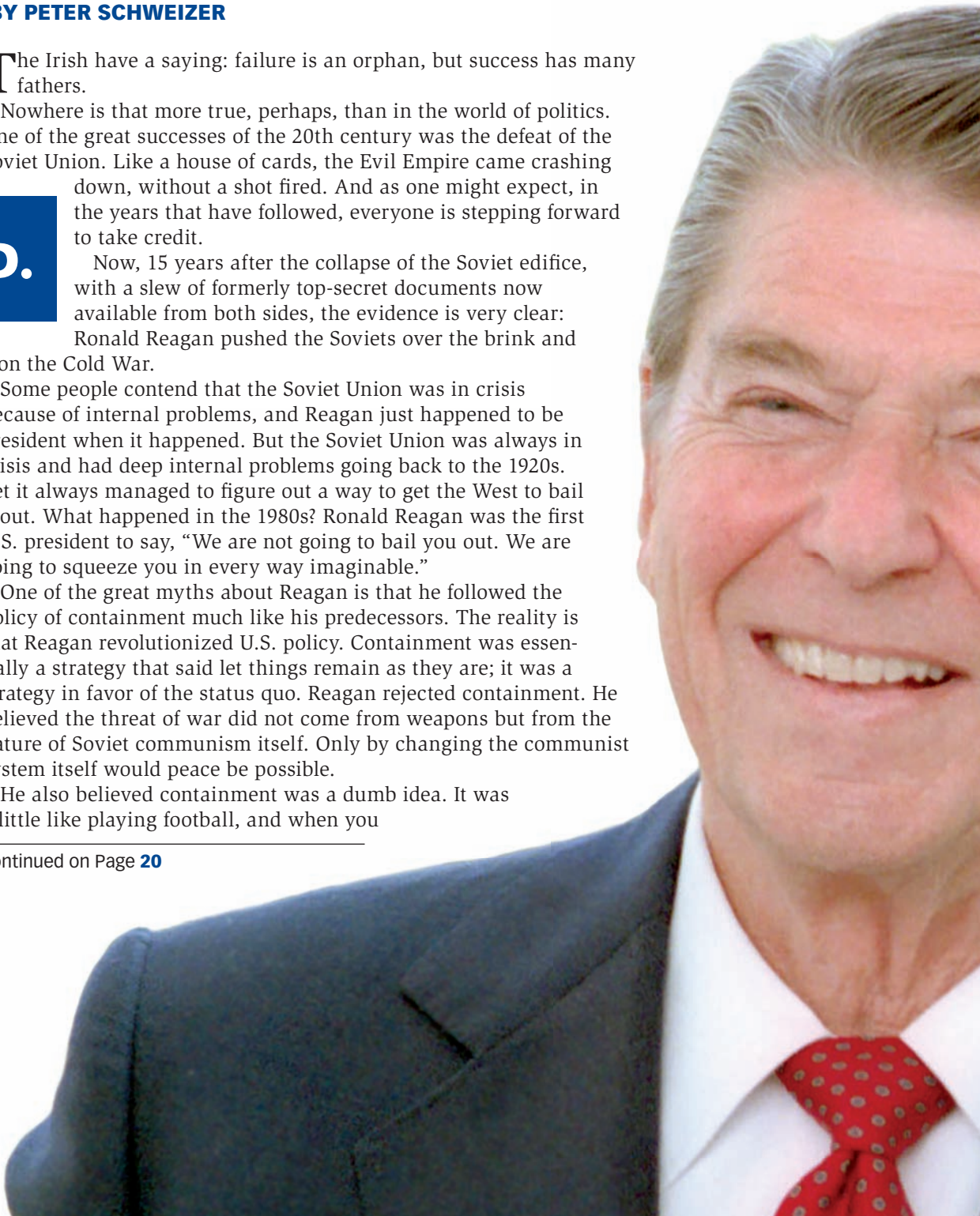
Ronald Reagan pushed the Soviets over the brink and won the Cold War.

Some people contend that the Soviet Union was in crisis because of internal problems, and Reagan just happened to be president when it happened. But the Soviet Union was always in crisis and had deep internal problems going back to the 1920s. Yet it always managed to figure out a way to get the West to bail it out. What happened in the 1980s? Ronald Reagan was the first U.S. president to say, "We are not going to bail you out. We are going to squeeze you in every way imaginable."

One of the great myths about Reagan is that he followed the policy of containment much like his predecessors. The reality is that Reagan revolutionized U.S. policy. Containment was essentially a strategy that said let things remain as they are; it was a strategy in favor of the status quo. Reagan rejected containment. He believed the threat of war did not come from weapons but from the nature of Soviet communism itself. Only by changing the communist system itself would peace be possible.

He also believed containment was a dumb idea. It was a little like playing football, and when you

continued on Page 20



AN LEGACY

WIN THE COLD WAR?

BY E.J. DIONNE JR.

Let's set aside the cheap polemical arguments up front. No liberal, certainly not this one, would want to deny that Ronald Reagan did some important things right in the Cold War. And no liberal should want to deny him a role in winning it.

To say, however, that Ronald Reagan won the Cold War and that other players weren't nearly as important is simply untrue to history. Such an account leaves out many other key actors, not least the American people. Their four decades of fortitude in what John F. Kennedy rightly described as a "long twilight struggle" was the essential element in America's victory.

A broad consensus embodying the democratic left, the democratic center and the democratic right – I use a small "d" here on purpose – supported the United States' role in protecting the world against the expansion of Soviet power. There were differences among Americans on specific questions (notably, and bitterly, the Vietnam War), but little doubt that the Soviet Union needed to be contained. Containment worked, and without that success, the Soviet Union would not have collapsed.

Attributing victory to Reagan alone also leaves out many U.S. presidents, including not only Harry Truman (he is now far more popular among conservatives than when he was in office), but also Jimmy Carter. Truman championed the Marshall Plan, set up the basic alliance structures and – yes, the word is unpopular among some – *multilateral* institutions that created prosperity in the free nations, which in turn bred solidarity in their ranks. He understood that a reforming democratic left in Europe could be our most important asset. Indeed, such European reformers showed that economic systems based on markets could be made more just – and that the path of reform was ultimately more attractive than totalitarianism.

**DIDN'T
REALLY.**

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continued on Page 24

from Page 18

finally got the ball, you punted on first down. Reagan wanted to take the offensive in the Cold War, and he did.

During his presidency, Reagan signed a series of top-secret directives designed to lay out U.S. strategy. (They are now declassified.) In National Security Decision Directive 75, the “global objectives” were to “contain and reverse the expansion of Soviet control and military presence throughout the world, and to increase the costs of Soviet support and use of proxy, terrorist or subversive forces.” Another was to “weaken the Soviet alliance system by forcing the USSR to bear the brunt of its economic shortcomings, and to encourage long-term liberalizing and nationalist tendencies within the Soviet Union and allied countries.”

Nothing like that had ever been incorporated into U.S. strategy. Reagan was determined to hit the Soviet Union hard on all fronts, and he was open about it. In a 1980 interview with *The Washington Post*, he said: “I think there’s every indication and every reason to believe that the Soviet Union cannot increase its production of arms. Right now we’re hearing of strikes and labor disputes because people aren’t getting enough to eat. They’ve diverted so much to military spending that they can’t provide for the consumer needs. It would be of great benefit to the United States if we started a buildup.”

The Reagan strategy was the squeeze strategy: prevent the Kremlin from getting Western life support – loans, credits, and high technology – while at the same time forcing it to spend money it couldn’t afford to spend.

How hard did he squeeze? According to the Soviets’ own numbers:

- Military spending increases announced to match Reagan cost the Soviet Union between \$15 billion and \$20 billion a year.
- Lost revenue due to restrictions on technology imports meant losing between \$1 billion and \$2 billion a year.
- Lost revenue from energy exports and no

credits from the West amounted to more than \$10 billion a year.

- Extra aid to tottering allies facing Reagan-backed insurgents forced it to cough up \$8 billion a year.

Consider that these costs were placed on a Soviet economy with hard currency earnings of approximately \$32 billion a year, and it’s no wonder the communist giant went bankrupt.

The military buildup was particularly troubling to the Kremlin because Reagan was investing in high technology, where the



President Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev talk at the first summit in Geneva. Courtesy Ronald Reagan Library

Soviets were particularly weak. The Strategic Defense Initiative, called “Star Wars,” created widespread panic among the leaders and compelled them to seek to accommodate Reagan. KGB Gen. Sergei Kondrashey recalls that SDI “influenced the situation in the country to such an extent that it made the necessity of seeking an understanding with the West very acute.” He created a sense of helplessness.

Gen. Makhmud Gareev recalls that many officers believed it “was beyond our power” to compete against Reagan. But Reagan not only waged an economic war against the Kremlin, he also fully engaged in the battle of ideas and supported those who were fighting communism. Reagan not only rejected communism, he also believed in freedom. In Poland, his views were clear: “We in the West have a responsibility not only to preserve our own freedom but to nurture it where it does not exist.” Again, Reagan wanted to go on the offensive. To accomplish that end, he provided

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Information for Patients

It is important for patients to understand how to correctly administer SPIRIVA capsules using the HandiHaler inhalation device (see **Patient's Instructions for Use**). SPIRIVA capsules should only be administered via the HandiHaler device and the HandiHaler device should not be used for administering other medications.

Capsules should always be stored in sealed blisters and only removed immediately before use. The blister strip should be carefully opened to expose only one capsule at a time. Open the blister foil as far as the **STOP** line to remove only one capsule at a time. The drug should be used immediately after the packaging over an individual capsule is opened, or else its effectiveness may be reduced. Capsules that are inadvertently exposed to air (i.e., not intended for immediate use) should be discarded.

Eye pain or discomfort, blurred vision, visual halos or colored images in association with red eyes from conjunctival congestion and corneal edema may be signs of acute narrow-angle glaucoma. Should any of these signs and symptoms develop, consult a physician immediately. Miotic eye drops alone are not considered to be effective treatment.

Care must be taken not to allow the powder to enter into the eyes as this may cause blurring of vision and pupil dilation.

SPIRIVA HandiHaler is a once-daily maintenance bronchodilator and should not be used for immediate relief of breathing problems, i.e., as a rescue medication.

Drug Interactions

SPIRIVA has been used concomitantly with other drugs commonly used in COPD without increases in adverse drug reactions. These include sympathomimetic bronchodilators, methylxanthines, and oral and inhaled steroids. However, the co-administration of SPIRIVA with other anticholinergic-containing drugs (e.g., ipratropium) has not been studied and is therefore not recommended.

Drug/Laboratory Test Interactions

None known.

Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility

No evidence of tumorigenicity was observed in a 104-week inhalation study in rats at tiotropium doses up to 0.059 mg/kg/day, in an 83-week inhalation study in female mice at doses up to 0.145 mg/kg/day, and in a 101-week inhalation study in male mice at doses up to 0.002 mg/kg/day. These doses correspond to 25, 35, and 0.5 times the Recommended Human Daily Dose (RHDD) on a mg/m² basis, respectively. These dose multiples may be over-estimated due to difficulties in measuring deposited doses in animal inhalation studies.

Tiotropium bromide demonstrated no evidence of mutagenicity or clastogenicity in the following assays: the bacterial gene mutation assay, the V79 Chinese hamster cell mutagenesis assay, the chromosomal aberration assays in human lymphocytes *in vitro* and mouse micronucleus formation *in vivo*, and the unscheduled DNA synthesis in primary rat hepatocytes *in vitro* assay.

In rats, decreases in the number of corpora lutea and the percentage of implants were noted at inhalation tiotropium doses of 0.078 mg/kg/day or greater (approximately 35 times the RHDD on a mg/m² basis). No such effects were observed at 0.009 mg/kg/day (approximately 4 times the RHDD on a mg/m² basis). The fertility index, however, was not affected at inhalation doses up to 1.689 mg/kg/day (approximately 760 times the RHDD on a mg/m² basis). These dose multiples may be over-estimated due to difficulties in measuring deposited doses in animal inhalation studies.

Pregnancy

Pregnancy Category C

No evidence of structural alterations was observed in rats and rabbits at inhalation tiotropium doses of up to 1.471 and 0.007 mg/kg/day, respectively. These doses correspond to approximately 660 and 6 times the recommended human daily dose (RHDD) on a mg/m² basis. However, in rats, fetal resorption, litter loss, decreases in the number of live pups at birth and the mean pup weights, and a delay in pup sexual maturation were observed at inhalation tiotropium doses of ≥ 0.078 mg/kg (approximately 35 times the RHDD on a mg/m² basis). In rabbits, an increase in post-implantation loss was observed at an inhalation dose of 0.4 mg/kg/day (approximately 360 times the RHDD on a mg/m² basis). Such effects were not observed at inhalation doses of 0.009 and up to 0.088 mg/kg/day in rats and rabbits, respectively. These doses correspond to approximately 4 and 80 times the RHDD on a mg/m² basis, respectively. These dose multiples may be over-estimated due to difficulties in measuring deposited doses in animal inhalation studies.

There are no adequate and well-controlled studies in pregnant women. SPIRIVA should be used during pregnancy only if the potential benefit justifies the potential risk to the fetus.

Use in Labor and Delivery

The safety and effectiveness of SPIRIVA has not been studied during labor and delivery.

Nursing Mothers

Clinical data from nursing women exposed to tiotropium are not available. Based on lactating rodent studies, tiotropium is excreted into breast milk. It is not known whether tiotropium is excreted in human milk, but because many drugs are excreted in human milk and given these findings in rats, caution should be exercised if SPIRIVA is administered to a nursing woman.

Pediatric Use

SPIRIVA HandiHaler is approved for use in the maintenance treatment of bronchospasm associated with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, including chronic bronchitis and emphysema. This disease does not normally occur in children. The safety and effectiveness of SPIRIVA in pediatric patients have not been established.

Geriatric Use

Of the total number of patients who received SPIRIVA in the 1-year clinical trials, 426 were <65 years, 375 were 65-74 years and 105 were ≥ 75 years of age. Within each age subgroup, there were no differences between the proportion of patients with adverse events in the SPIRIVA and the comparator groups for most events. Dry mouth increased with age in the SPIRIVA group (differences from placebo were 9.0%, 17.1%, and 16.2% in the aforementioned age subgroups). A higher frequency of constipation and urinary tract infections with increasing age was observed in the SPIRIVA group in the placebo-controlled studies. The differences from placebo for constipation were 0%, 1.8%, and 7.8% for each of the age groups. The differences from placebo for urinary tract infections were -0.6%, 4.6% and 4.5%. No overall differences in effectiveness were observed among these groups. Based on available data, no adjustment of SPIRIVA dosage in geriatric patients is warranted.

ADVERSE REACTIONS

Of the 2,663 patients in the four 1-year and two 6-month controlled clinical trials, 1,308 were treated with SPIRIVA (tiotropium bromide inhalation powder) at the recommended dose of 18 mcg once a day. Patients with narrow angle glaucoma, or symptomatic prostatic hypertrophy or bladder outlet obstruction were excluded from these trials.

The most commonly reported adverse drug reaction was dry mouth. Dry mouth was usually mild and often resolved during continued treatment. Other reactions reported in individual patients and consistent with possible anticholinergic effects included constipation, increased heart rate, blurred vision, glaucoma, urinary difficulty, and urinary retention.

Four multicenter, 1-year, controlled studies evaluated SPIRIVA in patients with COPD. Table 1 shows all adverse events that occurred with a frequency of $\geq 3\%$ in the SPIRIVA group in the 1-year placebo-controlled trials where the rates in the SPIRIVA group exceeded placebo by $\geq 1\%$. The frequency of corresponding events in the ipratropium-controlled trials is included for comparison.

Table 1: Adverse Experience Incidence (% Patients) in One-Year-COPD Clinical Trials

Body System (Event)	Placebo-Controlled Trials SPIRIVA (n=550)	Placebo (n=371)	Ipratropium-Controlled Trials SPIRIVA (n=356)	Ipratropium (n=179)
Body as a Whole				
Accidents	13	11	5	8
Chest Pain (non-specific)	7	5	5	2
Edema, Dependent	5	4	3	5
Gastrointestinal System Disorders				
Abdominal Pain	5	3	6	6
Constipation	4	2	1	1
Dry Mouth	16	3	12	6
Dyspepsia	6	5	1	1
Vomiting	4	2	1	2
Musculoskeletal System				
Myalgia	4	3	4	3
Resistance Mechanism Disorders				
Infection	4	3	1	3
Moniliasis	4	2	3	2
Respiratory System (upper)				
Epistaxis	4	2	1	1
Pharyngitis	9	7	7	3
Rhinitis	6	5	3	2
Sinusitis	11	9	3	2
Upper Respiratory Tract Infection	41	37	43	35
Skin and Appendage Disorders				
Rash	4	2	2	2
Urinary System				
Urinary Tract Infection	7	5	4	2

Arthritis, coughing, and influenza-like symptoms occurred at a rate of $\geq 3\%$ in the SPIRIVA treatment group, but were $<1\%$ in excess of the placebo group.

Other events that occurred in the SPIRIVA group at a frequency of 1-3% in the placebo-controlled trials where the rates exceeded that in the placebo group include: *Body as a Whole*: allergic reaction, leg pain; *Central and Peripheral Nervous System*: dysphonia, paresthesia; *Gastrointestinal System Disorders*: gastrointestinal disorder not otherwise specified (NOS), gastroesophageal reflux, stomatitis (including ulcerative stomatitis); *Metabolic and Nutritional Disorders*: hypercholesterolemia, hyperglycemia; *Musculoskeletal System Disorders*: skeletal pain; *Cardiac Events*: angina pectoris (including aggravated angina pectoris); *Psychiatric Disorder*: depression; *Infections*: herpes zoster; *Respiratory System Disorder (Upper)*: laryngitis; *Vision Disorder*: cataract. In addition, among the adverse events observed in the clinical trials with an incidence of $<1\%$ were atrial fibrillation, supraventricular tachycardia, angioedema, and urinary retention.

In the 1-year trials, the incidence of dry mouth, constipation, and urinary tract infection increased with age (see **PRECAUTIONS, Geriatric Use**).

Two multicenter, 6-month, controlled studies evaluated SPIRIVA in patients with COPD. The adverse events and the incidence rates were similar to those seen in the 1-year controlled trials.

The following adverse reactions have been identified during worldwide post-approval use of SPIRIVA: dizziness, epistaxis, hoarseness, palpitations, pruritus, tachycardia, throat irritation, and urticaria.

DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION

The recommended dosage of SPIRIVA HandiHaler (tiotropium bromide inhalation powder) is the inhalation of the contents of one SPIRIVA capsule, once-daily, with the HandiHaler inhalation device (see **Patient's Instructions for Use**).

No dosage adjustment is required for geriatric, hepatically-impaired, or renally-impaired patients. However, patients with moderate to severe renal impairment given SPIRIVA should be monitored closely (see **CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY, Pharmacokinetics, Special Populations and PRECAUTIONS**).

SPIRIVA capsules are for inhalation only and must not be swallowed.

HOW SUPPLIED

The following packages are available:

carton containing 6 SPIRIVA capsules (1 blister card) and 1 HandiHaler inhalation device (NDC 0597-0075-06)
carton containing 30 SPIRIVA capsules (5 blister cards) and 1 HandiHaler inhalation device (NDC 0597-0075-37)

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material support to those resisting communism in Poland, in Central America and around the world. U.S. funds bought guns for the Contras in Nicaragua and printing presses and computers for Solidarity in Poland. And Reagan's support was decisive. When I asked former Gen. Czeslaw Kiszczak, head of Poland's secret police in the 1980s, about Reagan's support he told me: "The assistance from (the) American government for Solidarity was essential."

Reagan did more than simply fight the Soviets with more money and muscle. When it came to the battle of ideas, Reagan's words were also decisive. He went on Radio Free Europe and encouraged people behind the Iron Curtain to continue their fight against communism. Soviet dissidents who had been fighting Soviet communism for years without much encouragement from the West suddenly found a friend in Reagan. When Reagan uttered the words "evil empire," he was attacked for being "simplistic." But in the Soviet gulag, prisoners like Natan Sharansky say they felt energized and emboldened. A U.S. president was honestly speaking about how terrible the Soviet system really was.

What is so surprising about those who want to avoid giving credit is that the Soviets give Reagan plenty of credit for what he did. While the Soviet archives reveal they viewed President Carter as someone who was making America a "second-rate power," Reagan's KGB file reveals grudging respect: "He proved himself as a dyed-in-the-wool anti-communist in that he actively participated in the campaign to drive progressive persons out of the film industry and the unions." They described him as a "firm and unbending politician for whom words and deeds are one and the same."

And firm and unbending he was. The Soviets had seen tough-talking presidents before, people like Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, who once in office became more moderate and sought to sign agreements with the Kremlin. The Soviets expected the same from Reagan but never got it. "No matter what diplomatic tack Moscow examined or actually took," recalled Soviet Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Dobrynin, "the Reagan administration proved impervious to it. We came to realize that in contrast to most



President Reagan speaks at the Berlin Wall outside the Brandenburg Gate in the Federal Republic of Germany. Courtesy Ronald Reagan Library

presidents who shift from their electoral rhetoric to more centrist pragmatic positions by the middle of their presidential term, Reagan displayed an active immunity to the traditional forces, both internal and external, that normally produce a classic adjustment."

During his first summit meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev, Reagan was blunt: "Let me tell you, Mr. General Secretary, why we fear you and why we despise your system." No one had ever talked to a Soviet leader that way.

Those who want to lump Reagan in with other presidents or who believe that the Soviet Union collapsed under its own weight simply don't know the history of the Reagan years, nor have they read through the Soviet archives. Ronald Reagan was the man who won the Cold War without firing a shot.

Those who study these things may continue to argue this point, but those who Reagan helped free know what he accomplished. On a swing through Europe after the fall of communism, Reagan received high praise from those who had suffered under communism. In Berlin, he was greeted by a love song written in his honor: "The Man Who Made Those Pussyfooters and Weaklings Feel Ashamed." When he visited Poland, he was greeted by thousands, including Solidarity leader Lech Walesa's parish priest. Handing Reagan a sword, he said, "I am giving you the saber for helping us to chop off the head of communism." 🌿

Peter Schweizer is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and author of "Reagan's War" (Doubleday).

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And Jimmy Carter's role in America's victory is almost always ignored. It is forgotten that America's standing in the world declined during the Vietnam years. Carter's human-rights campaign restored the United States' ideological and moral authority. That Carter was willing to call to task right-wing as well as left-wing dictatorships demonstrated to many doubters that the United States was serious about its commitment to freedom. More than many of Reagan's firmest partisans want to allow, the 40th president's later emphasis on human rights was built upon the foundations laid by his predecessor.

They leave out, as well, Eastern European dissidents, especially the brave Poles. These groups in Eastern Europe, including the Solidarity trade-union movement, were operating courageously and intelligently before Ronald Reagan took office. That movement he later supported was not brought into being by Reagan. Eastern European dissidents often won even more support in the free world from the noncommunist left than from the right, which was so focused on weapons systems and military matters.

There was also the papacy of Pope John Paul II and the important role he played in undermining communism. As far as I can tell, Reagan had absolutely nothing to do with John Paul's election in 1978, two years before the Gipper won election.

Arguments about Reagan's presidency once broke down between pro-Reagan and anti-Reagan camps. A sense of history and – let's be candid – the sense among many liberals that Reagan was in practice a far more moderate president than George W. Bush have transformed that debate into a more useful discussion. Conservatives still want to use the Reagan presidency to score polemical points for their creed. My suggestion is to look at aspects of the Reagan presidency on which there is consensus across the political divide.

For example, conservatives like to argue that Reagan's military buildup was the primary force behind our Cold War victory. This is a good way to

drive a wedge between conservatives and liberals, since many liberals still view the military buildup as unnecessarily large and as digging an unfortunate budget hole even deeper. Put aside that the military expansion actually started under Carter. I would argue that the military buildup was less important than Reagan's handling of the Euromissile crisis in the early 1980s. Perhaps it's because I lived in Europe during the fight over placing the Pershing missiles in England, Italy and Germany that I see the consenting decision of those countries' governments as a decisive – perhaps *the*



President Reagan and his wife, Nancy, meet with Pope John Paul II at Vatican City in Rome. Courtesy Ronald Reagan Library

decisive – moment in the Cold War. Faced with their own deep economic crisis, leaders of the Soviet Union realized the only card they had left was to break solidarity in the West.

If European governments and the U.S. government had split on the missile issue, the Soviets would have had many opportunities for mischief. It's a great triumph for which Reagan deserves some real credit. The Western alliance held together. Conservatives don't like focusing on this, because this was a moment when diplomacy and politics were central to the West's success. Reagan understood the importance of diplomacy, persuasion and allies.

Conservatives who like to talk about weapons systems, including "Star Wars," almost never want to discuss the single most important judgment Ronald Reagan made that ended the Cold War: he understood Mikhail Gorbachev better and earlier

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than most – myself included, by the way. He saw that Gorbachev was a genuine reformer, that Gorbachev had decided the Soviet system was bankrupt, that radical reform was necessary. This side of Ronald Reagan is a side that conservatives very much worried about at the time. They saw him as naïve. They never want to talk about it now.

Reagan was willing to make a sweeping disarmament agreement with Gorbachev, a willingness on Reagan's part that strengthened Gorbachev's hand against Kremlin hawks. Gorbachev, too, deserves credit for the end of the Cold War – and Reagan deserves credit for breaking with right-wing ideology in seeing Gorbachev as a genuine partner.

Conservatives seem to want to embrace Reagan's hawkish side but not his dovish side. They want to embrace him as an ideologue but not as a pragmatist. They want to suggest that only force, toughness, confrontation and large-scale military spending won the Cold War. They do not want to acknowledge that soft power, strong alliances, smart diplomacy, shrewdness in seizing opportunities for negotiation and good sense in judging other human beings played a large role in his success. They want to claim that only conservatives won the Cold War because they don't want to acknowledge that liberal values – a belief in universal human rights underwritten by strong alliances, a confidence that building more socially just societies would trump communism's false egalitarian claims – were implemental in undermining Soviet power. They want to pretend that the West knew nothing until Ronald Reagan came on the scene and that the United States was feckless until he won the presidency.

At this time of extreme political polarization, I'm not surprised that conservatives cling to this account of the Gipper. It is politically useful, perhaps, in the short term. But it will not help our country in the long run. Against claims that Reagan did it all, I'd suggest Americans would be better off if we credited Reagan for what he genuinely did well and try to learn from his actual experience, fully understood. We'd also be better off if we acknowledged victory in the Cold War as a long-term project involving both parties and not as a partisan triumph.

And, yes, we would usefully show a decent respect for heroes outside the United States who chose to advance freedom – from the pope to the Eastern European dissidents, from Gorbachev to the Western European governments who stood firm on the missiles. Reagan didn't do it all by



Berliners celebrate on top of the wall as East Germans flood through the dismantled Berlin Wall into West Berlin at Potsdamer Platz on Nov. 12, 1989. AP

himself. While I can't pretend to know what he would think, I suspect that's the way he felt, too.

We've learned over the past four years what happens when our debates regarding U.S. interests in the world become hopelessly ideological, when we forget that a successful foreign policy usually rests on broad political coalitions at home and working alliances abroad. Ronald Reagan was a fascinating man because he was a proud ideologue who also understood the importance of diplomacy, persuasion and the help that friends could offer. An honest analysis of the Cold War would be advanced more effectively by a less ideological approach to foreign policy and a less ideological understanding of Ronald Reagan. 🌿

E.J. Dionne Jr. is a syndicated columnist with The Washington Post, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and a professor at Georgetown University. He is also the author of "Why Americans Hate Politics."

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BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

Unlike North Korea, Japan could make reliable nuclear weapons and sophisticated long-range missiles in the manner it turns out Hondas and Toyotas – and many thousands of them within a year. While that nuclear scenario might have once seemed Orwellian – given Japan’s pacifist constitution and American memories of Pearl Harbor, Iwo Jima and Okinawa – Japanese and U.S. diplomats alike are now openly discussing the possibility.

Not long ago, Ichiro Ozawa of Japan’s Liberal Party warned Chinese officials that his country might well match China’s nuclear arsenal: “If Japan desires, it could have thousands of nuclear warheads overnight.” And newly elected Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced that possession of defensive nuclear weapons is nevertheless permitted under Article 9 of Japan’s 1946 constitution, which prohibits Japan from maintaining a military for the purpose of offensive warfare.

Japanese officials are not alone in imagining the once unimaginable. U.S. diplomats, public intellectuals and military officials increasingly have accepted the notion of a rearmed – and nuclear – Japan. *The Wall Street Journal* summed up the growing consensus in Washington policy circles that a nuclear Japan might well be “inevitable.” Columnist George Will has written a series of essays, urging us to “unbind” Japan. Charles Krauthammer shrugged: “If our nightmare is a nuclear North Korea, China’s is a nuclear Japan. It’s time to share the nightmares.”

Why nearly two decades after the Cold War and the supposed “end of history” is there now such talk of a radical change in Japan’s military status?

The answer, of course, is found not just in the enormous wealth and technological savvy of the Japanese that heretofore have not translated into commensurate overwhelming military might. Just as important is the paradoxical and radically altered position of China – Japan’s “nightmare.” With the collapse of global communism, and the end of the Soviet empire, it was initially thought that Mao’s old communist state would likewise wither on the vine. But its radical turn to capitalism and free markets so far has empowered, rather than enervated, the communist apparatus. The result for now is the worst of both worlds: an aggressive authoritarian state with sophisticated

UNSTABLE PART OF THE WORLD,

NUCLEAR JAPAN

IN AN INCREASINGLY

westernized weapons. And China exercises insidious financial clout and employs even so-called “soft power,” drawing from its massive trade surpluses with the United States and Europe.

Consider the resulting plight of nearby wealthy and humane Japan. Its reward for some 60 years of remarkably responsible postwar behavior is to end up with nuclear aggressive states next door that threaten all Japan has accomplished. When not reminding Japan of its growing arsenal – hundreds of nuclear warheads deliverable by cruise, submarine-based and intercontinental missiles, as well as sophisticated aircraft – China receives psychological satisfaction in seeing Japan squirm before its rogue client, North Korea.

The North Korean government has kidnapped Japanese citizens, sent test missiles over Japan, and earned from South Korea appeasement rather than defiance for its threats. Instead of showing restraint, Chinese ships and planes barge into Japanese air space and territorial waters, and dispute off-shore drilling rights. And in Tokyo all sorts of legitimate doubts linger about Japan’s supposed kindred front-line democratic allies.

Taiwan, for example, is facing overwhelming Chinese military superiority – even as it is invited to invest billions of dollars in joint Chinese ventures. That carrot-and-stick approach by the mainland communists raises the specter not merely that Taiwan might not be defensible but could incrementally become “Finlandized,” losing its unique Chinese democratic identity through intimidation masked as mutual profit-taking.

Similar worries surround the South Koreans, who have experienced a tragic history of Japanese occupation and still harbor deep anti-Japanese feelings. Is the “sunshine policy” of a non-nuclear South Korea the result of constant threats of annihilation from Pyongyang, or does Seoul hope for peaceful reunification? Such a reconciliation, after all, might result in de-facto inheritance of North Korean nuclear weapons, as well as friendly relations with an anti-Japanese China.

As is the case with a sophisticated and powerful Germany that has renounced nuclear weapons, only to be blackmailed for billions in aid by a soon-to-be-nuclear Islamic Iran, there is a growing exasperation in Japan with the current onslaught of nuclear proliferation. Pakistan and North Korea,

unlike Japan, are failed states that without their nuclear weapons would garner little foreign aid. Yet their newfound strategic capabilities offer international stature, cash and deterrence against their enemies.

Iran is apparently next. While Japan receives little international attention, or much praise, for its restraint, the European Union, the United Nations, the Arab world and the United States, all in varying degrees, pay close attention to the Iranian mullahcracy. They offer it North-Korea-like financial incentives, and in general accord deference not commensurate with either its moral or economic accomplishments. At some point, proud and successful democracies like Japan will resent blackmail paid to corrupt and dangerous nations on the sole basis of their violation of nuclear-proliferation accords.

Then there is the key role of the United States. As long as Japan was snugly under the U.S. nuclear umbrella there was no need to worry over its strategic deterrence. But recent developments have called that once-ironclad assurance into question. First, the United States is preoccupied in Afghanistan and Iraq. Wartime commitment in money and manpower has tried not just the U.S. military but wearied the nation’s taxpayers as well. There are new currents of isolationism, appeasement and retrenchment in the United States. None of them bode well for the old Cold War calculus of the United States ensuring Japan that it would risk an attack on San Francisco or Seattle to ensure that Tokyo was sacrosanct.

So with withdrawal of some U.S. troops from Europe and South Korea, there is a general, and growing, sense that the United States is tired and hardly eager to confront, if need be in nuclear fashion, the world’s largest nation over issues of Japanese sovereignty. After all, a state that tears itself apart on global television over 2,500 combat dead in Iraq, and openly discusses timetables of departure from Baghdad, might seem an unlikely patron willing to risk far more lives and treasure in a war with China for an allied third party – especially when both Taiwan and South Korea might draw on the same shrinking resources in their own times of crisis. In response, “outsourcing” the Chinese and North Korean problems to a rearmed and nuclear Japan that could become a

regional democratic policeman – perhaps in the manner of John Howard’s Australians in the South Pacific – has some appeal to those insisting on a smaller U.S. footprint.

Second, as long as Japan needs U.S. nuclear assurances to survive, it will find itself losing freedom of action in economical and political disagreements with the United States, against the landscape of an increasingly globalized world of limited resources and ever more competing consumers. Instead, Japan can look at Israel’s friendship with the United States as a model of what might evolve when a former client becomes a nuclear partner – especially in regards to our frequent inability to coerce Israel to conform to U.S. Middle East policy.

All this is not to say that Japan will choose to acquire nuclear weapons. It has understandably developed a 60-year “nuclear allergy” to the very thought, given its unfortunate example of being the only nation in the world to have been on the receiving end of a nuclear strike.

The population of Japan is also aging and shrinking, and may not wish to cut entitlements to expand defense spending much beyond the present 1 percent to 2 percent rate of its gross domestic product. And the acquisition of nuclear missiles also forces a nation to sit at the dangerous table of nuclear poker, where once conventional stand-offs always raise the specter of complex bluffing or escalation to armageddon. There is also bad blood against the Japanese not just in South Korea but throughout the former “co-prosperity sphere” of wartime imperial Japan. A newly rearmed and nuclear Japan might rekindle such worries and ironically drive Southeast Asians, Filipinos, Koreans and the Taiwanese into the arms of China.

There are also just as many longer-term worries in the United States as there are short-term advantages of a nuclear Japan. The Pacific theater of World War II is six decades old, but not forgotten – given the far greater savagery there than during the struggle against the Germans and Italians. Pearl Harbor, Guadalcanal, the Bataan Death March and Okinawa are not just ancient memories. To Americans, they raise legitimate worries that the worst thing we could do is to encourage a former enemy to recapture its pride in arms.

After the United States saved South Korea, and expended thousands of lives and billions of dollars to give it a chance of democratic evolution, we are learning that South Koreans often sound as anti-American as our enemies across the demilitarized zone. The specter of a similarly resentful Japan is one thing, a resentful nuclear Japan quite another.

There is no end to the logic of nuclear proliferation: if Japan and North Korea now, why not Taiwan and South Korea later – both of which can easily obtain nuclear arsenals without U.S. or European help? At some point, China must wake up and realize that its failed diplomacy has earned it nuclear neighbors in India, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia and U.S. forward bases. That encirclement alone should suggest Beijing corral North Korea rather than face two or three more nuclear adversaries in Japan, Taiwan and South Korea.

Gone are the simple old days of bipolarity, when communist Russia and China were on one side with their clients, and a free Taiwan, South Korea and Japan were protected by the U.S. nuclear shield. Russia for now has faded out of the picture. No one can quite figure out whether Chinese modernization will lead to commensurate political liberalization or just a better-equipped and more lethal red military. Our “allies” often have proven our harshest critics in the war against terror, and resent the presence of U.S. troops almost as much as they do our threatened withdrawal. Since the Soviet Union unwound, two more states have gone nuclear, with a third on the way, and there have been genocide and savage wars from the Balkans to the Middle East to Rwanda.

Gone, too, is the age of cheap resources, as once-socialist states develop a voracious capitalist appetite for fossil fuels, ores, timber and food. Importers like Japan must either count on the United States to uphold global trading laws and prevent the world from descending into the jungle of an Iranian mullah, al-Qaeda terrorist, or aggrandizing and often rogue China, or on its own ensure that it is safe from attack, blackmail and terrorism.

So where does all this ultimately lead? Japan will either be forcefully reassured that the United States is still willing to use nuclear weapons on its behalf, or it will not. If the latter, it will build a nuclear arsenal.

In response, we the patron may be led by Japan the client in our response to the threats posed in China and North Korea, and worries about the stoutness of South Korea. So for now, if the United States insists on a non-nuclear Japan, then it must privilege Japanese feelings in almost every policy decision the United States makes in Asia – and even elsewhere.

Or else. 🌸

Victor Davis Hanson is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution. He is the author, most recently, of “A War Like No Other: How the Athenians and Spartans Fought the Peloponnesian War.”

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A HALF-CENTURY AFTER THE KOREAN WAR, KIM IL-SUNG'S ANTI-AMERICAN SENTIMENT STILL PERMEATES NORTH KOREA'S MOST PROMINENT WAR MUSEUM.

BY MICHAEL PATRICK CARNEY

The Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum, a 170,000-square-foot warehouse of war artifacts in downtown Pyongyang, North Korea, looks like all the other drab buildings in this run-down capital of Korean communism. And except for a colorful life-size mural of Kim Il-Sung in the lobby, the gloomy interior more than meets our expectations.

Slabs of stone cover the floors and walls. It's sunny outside, but little natural light makes its way inside the building. A few low-powered bulbs cast just enough light for us to see what's inside the glass cases that line the walls. The darkness fits our mood after days of non-stop propaganda, including tours of the demilitarized zone near Panmunjom and the USS *Pueblo*, a U.S. spy ship the North Koreans captured in 1968.

As has often been the case, we have the museum to ourselves. Today's tour begins on the first floor in a wing devoted to the defense of North Korea's

version of history. The guide, an attractive woman in her 40s known as Mrs. Kim, wears a North Korean army uniform. She speaks fluent English in a soft voice that grows anguished as she waves her wooden pointer from case to case, each of which, she says, contains important evidence against the United States.

Since the war has yet to end – the belligerents signed an armistice in 1953 but have yet to agree on a permanent peace treaty – both sides are free to write their own versions of what sparked one of the bloodiest conflicts of the Cold War. In the United States, it is widely accepted that the communists instigated the conflict by launching a sneak attack against South Korea in 1950. That said, the war is ancient history to most people. It warrants scant mention in U.S. history textbooks and a largely overlooked memorial in Washington to the millions who fought and thousands who died in this war.

LEFT: A North Korean soldier steps on Old Glory in the painted background of a diorama on display at the national war museum in Pyongyang. *Michael Patrick Carney*

Such is not the case in North Korea. The half-century-old conflict consumes the entire nation. Statues of soldiers fill the parks of Pyongyang. Colorful propaganda posters cover the walls of public spaces throughout the country.

Make America Pay. North Korea has the world's fourth-largest standing army and, despite decades of steady economic decline, the regime devotes a large portion of its gross national product to military readiness and equipment. This pro-military, anti-U.S. sentiment touches every facet of society. At a middle school in the capital, a hallway is decorated with a large painting that shows smiling schoolchildren leading an American POW in shackles through the snow. Down the hall, another poster lists the current English lessons, which include "humble the pride of the U.S." and "make the U.S. pay the price of blood."

It's not hard to imagine our guide reciting such sentiments as a child. Like the vast majority of North Koreans, Mrs. Kim has spent her entire life under the absolute control of Kim Il-Sung and his son, Kim Jong-il, omnipotent rulers who let their subjects know little about their own country and even less about the world beyond its borders.

She praises the warrior ethos of "the Great Leader," as the elder Kim is known, but has nothing at all to say about the hundreds of thousands of Chinese soldiers who intervened in the war in late 1950 after the North Koreans suffered a series of devastating military setbacks that allowed U.N. forces to advance all the way to the Yalu River on the northern border and cost the communists control of Pyongyang.

False Depictions. In the government-sanctioned narrative, Kim Il-Sung almost single-handedly repelled the premeditated invasion of the North by South Korean and U.S. military forces in 1950. And thanks to decades of relentless, almost mind-numbing propaganda, many believe that another U.S. attack is likely, if not imminent.

The Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum is the pièce de résistance of the regime's propaganda efforts. The 80-room facility, about the same size as the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum, appears to serve one purpose: convince visitors that the United States and its "lackeys" in the South perpetrated war crimes against the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Exhibits rely heavily on official U.S. documents, quoted in part or out of context, to make the case that Western forces attacked the North, and not vice versa. For the even less plausible charges, such as those alleging a widespread campaign by the United States to murder innocent women and children, the curators depend on specious arguments and shocking imagery to make their case. They display photographs of Koreans being maimed or murdered, allegedly at the hands of Western forces. They use mimeographs of English-language communiqués to create the impression that North Korea is right and the rest of the world is wrong. One display, typical of the others, quotes from the "Korea Handbook," a compilation of writings edited by Agnes Smedley, an American who spied for the Soviet, Chinese and Indian communist movements:

"Who began it? For many months, the Americans and their agents had been preparing to begin the shooting, which began at last on June 25, 1950, after two days' preliminary bombardment of North Korean territory, with the entry of South Korean forces at three points into North Korea."

For anyone with lingering doubts about North Korea's version of history, the museum offers a bit of visual confirmation in the form of a roadside sign the Americans are said to have erected south of the border before the war: *"Here is 38 parallel. Lets dash north."*

Demoralizing Displays. Upstairs, we sit on benches in the center of a rotunda that is surrounded on all sides by a highly detailed diorama that depicts various incidents from the war. We rotate under a golden ceiling with a red star in the center and examine the simulated battlefield, as depicted by the regime's propaganda artists. In one section, a jubilant North Korean soldier holds a trembling U.S. Army general at gunpoint. In another, a fearsome North Korean soldier steps on Old Glory while leading a charge against beleaguered U.S. forces. The Koreans smile; the Americans, drawn with long noses and bloodthirsty expressions, cower.

Downstairs, we find more of the same. Dozens of battle-scarred fighters, Jeeps, tanks, trucks, ships and helicopters are arranged in a massive subterranean space with low ceilings and gray concrete floors. One of the planes, a single-seater

by the looks of it, is burned almost beyond recognition. From the bullet holes in a U.S. Army truck – four punctures in the white star on the door – it’s hard to imagine the driver escaped without injury.

The dead are never far during this portion of our tour. A black-and-white mural adorns one wall with images of American POWs. At the end, a lone U.S. soldier gazes forlornly over a burial ground with rows of stark white crosses. Hundreds of M-1 rifles cover the floor. Helmets, canteens, radios and mess kits are scattered throughout. So are bazookas and machine guns. The insignia of the 2nd Infantry Division and 555th Battalion lay on top of well-worn military uniforms. Near the middle of this macabre display is a tattered U.S. flag hanging haphazardly next to a replica of the traditional battlefield marker: rifles planted in the ground under an olive-drab steel helmet.

Most of my fellow travelers are European tourists who feign respect for the North Korean political system, either to avoid trouble with the guides or to curry favor with our host, a Spaniard who heads an international group that provides financial and moral support to Kim Jong-il’s regime.

A few profess genuine admiration for the spectacles on display at the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum and other showcases of this nature, but the majority seem increasingly uncomfortable with the xenophobic paranoia that greets us at every turn. A couple openly snicker at

some of the more outlandish displays of fealty to the regime and opposition to the “long-nosed wolves” in Washington.

I have never seen anyone take such delight in the death and destruction of others, but I try to be polite during the eight-day trip.

The guide, for her part, remains solemn throughout the tour – not because of all the people who died fighting on both sides of a war that had ended right back where it began, but because of the gravity of the atrocities that she believes U.S. troops committed against her country. Adopting a particularly grim expression, Mrs. Kim stops in front of a charred tree trunk that had been roped off from the rest of the room.

“This is ‘the Hero Tree,’” she says, explaining that the 600-year-old tree’s branches once spanned 452 square meters – wide enough for the communists to hide large numbers of soldiers and as many as 10 trucks from passing reconnaissance flights. With a level of emotion that would have been touching had she been referring to a sentient being, she laments its loss during a U.S. bombing raid. To her, the loss of this one tree was more important than the lives of nearly 60,000 soldiers who fought under the flag of the United Nations. 🌳

Michael Patrick Carney is a freelance reporter based in Washington. He can be contacted at michaelpatrickcarney@gmail.com.

THE LIFE OF KIM IL-SUNG

Born into a peasant family on April 15, 1912, in Mangyondae, Korea, Kim Il-Sung was a child when his parents left Japan-occupied Korea for Manchuria. In 1932, he became the leader of a small group of Korean partisans, which he led in various raids against Japanese outposts in Korea. In the early 1940s, Kim received military training in the Soviet Union. In 1945, Kim returned to his homeland as a major in the Soviet army, tasked with forming a provisional government in Soviet-occupied Korea. In 1948, he became the first premier of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. Strongly favoring national unification by military means, Kim’s regime waged a guerrilla war against the South and, with Soviet support, built up a large military.

With Stalin’s approval, Kim invaded the South in June 1950. But only by a massive Chinese intervention did Kim’s regime survive a U.S.-led counteroffensive. In 1953, Kim and his Soviet and Chinese guardians settled for half the country, but until his death in 1994, he continued efforts to overthrow the South’s rulers.

After 1953, Kim created an austere, militarized and highly regimented North Korean society that worshipped him as a deified leader. Since the 1970s, North Korea has been a major arms supplier to countries such as Libya, Iran and Syria. In 1993, U.S. intelligence estimated that North Korea was less than two years away from being able to strike South Korea and Japan with nuclear missiles.

Kim died at age 82 on July 8, 1994, in Pyongyang, North Korea. He was succeeded by his son, Kim Jong-il, who continues to rule the country with an iron fist while advancing the country’s nuclear weapons program. On October 9, 2006, North Korea’s Korean Central News Agency announced the country had successfully conducted an underground nuclear test.



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VA HEALTH CARE

A System Worth Saving

This is the final installment of a series about the status of VA's Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services process. CARES looked 20 years into the future of the nation's largest managed-care program and envisioned greater access, lower costs and increased efficiency. Two years later, that vision awaits final decisions and federal funding necessary to fulfill the program's many promises across the nation.

ABOVE: VA Secretary R. James Nicholson says CARES 'was very ambitious, to say the least,' but the priority list it produced continues to guide the department's planning. *Noel St. John*

VA SECRETARY R. JAMES NICHOLSON:

CARES is not abandoned

Monumental realignment of VA health-care system is just taking longer than expected.

As the 21st century dawned and hundreds of thousands of veterans were pouring into an aging VA health-care system, Congress laid down an ultimatum. Funds for new construction of VA medical facilities would be denied until a coherent and well-prioritized long-term national plan was in hand. Four years and immeasurable anxiety later, the plan was delivered.

The 2004 Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services – CARES – decision looked two decades into the future and attempted to lay out a “well-reasoned roadmap” for 21st-century VA health care. Ignited by a 1999 government report that suggested VA was spending millions of health-care dollars a year managing unnecessary property, CARES would ultimately take on much more than issues of bricks and mortar. It became a philosophy statement about how America would fulfill its promise to military veterans needing medical care.

The final CARES decision – ceremonially delivered by then-VA Secretary Anthony Principi in hospital-starved Las Vegas – examined shifting demographics and changing ways Americans seek and receive medical care. CARES called for closure or dramatically changed missions for about two dozen VA hospitals nationwide, most of which were over a half-century old and designed to meet the needs of an era when patients often spent many nights in the hospital for procedures that today are handled on an outpatient basis. It called for new medical centers in Las Vegas, Denver and Orlando, Fla. It recommended 156 new community-based outpatient clinics across the land. It suggested greater use of contracted services in rural areas where access is a problem.

In places like Pittsburgh, Chicago, Livermore, Calif., and Waco, Texas, where closures and reduced missions were prescribed, veterans angrily protested. They viewed CARES as a net subtraction of services to rein in federal costs. In some cities, veterans picketed. They spoke up in public hearings. They had motorcycle rallies. They appealed to local government and the media. Veterans were meanwhile elated in Las Vegas,

Denver and Orlando, where VA hospital projects overdue for decades were finally on the table.

However, by spring 2006, veterans in nearly all affected communities wondered if the table was as far as CARES would get. The \$1 billion in annual dedicated funds Principi said was required to fulfill the CARES promise had not come to pass; the budget proposal for VA construction in 2007 was about one-third of that.

Projects that were not identified by CARES suddenly appeared near the top of the new-construction priority list, while some of the highest CARES priorities languished without funding. Veterans in Las Vegas, Denver and Orlando have waited in frustration for decisions and dollars, disappointed that the 2004 promise of CARES was not being fulfilled by new Republican leadership in the House and Senate Veterans Affairs committees, nor enthusiastically adopted by new VA Secretary R. James Nicholson, who replaced Principi in early 2005.

As 2007 and a new congressional session begin, the House and Senate Veterans Affairs committees are under new, Democratic leadership. And Nicholson says, contrary to the beliefs of many veterans, the promise of CARES is not broken. It’s just taking longer than expected, for reasons that range from the costs of the war on terror to fast-rising demand for day-to-day patient services.

Nicholson recently spoke with *The American Legion Magazine*, in his Washington office, about CARES and the future of VA construction.

Q: *There was such a level of expectation after the 2004 CARES decision was released, but veterans in affected communities have been greatly disappointed that projects have not progressed. Were veterans’ expectations realistic?*

A: It’s a little difficult for me to say whether they were realistic at the time, because I wasn’t involved in the process. Now, I am. In looking back, given the enormity of the system that was under review, and the recommendations that came out of it, it was very ambitious to say the least. Now things are moving. We just broke ground for a

new hospital in Las Vegas. We have narrowed the universe to two sites for a new hospital in Orlando. We have a site under option for the new hospital in Denver. We have announced a new hospital for Louisville. We are under way with the enormous renovations of facilities in Pittsburgh. There is a lot in motion as a result of this. Whether it comports to everybody's timetable, I don't know. I sense the impatience on the part of some people. Las Vegas needs a new hospital. Orlando needs a new hospital. There is no question about it.

Q: *When CARES was released, your predecessor suggested it would require \$1 billion a year in dedicated funding for a half-dozen years, plus an ongoing commitment. Why hasn't that funding materialized?*

A: I think there's a combination of reasons. If you look at the budgets themselves, they have increased substantially for VA. That's to meet needs that have increased as well. Veterans are smart. They are coming into our facilities in ever greater numbers because the care they are getting is very arguably the best in the country. Veterans who have other options are coming to VA for their care.

We're at war. They had 600,000 people return from the combat zone so far who have been discharged and have become eligible for VA care. That's exacerbated demand on our services, which has caused the budget to go up on the operational side, so the capital budgeting has not met that \$1 billion expectation. But we have, in that time, opened 37 new community-based outpatient clinics. They range from a 4,000-square-foot storefront to a 300,000-foot clinic, which is under construction.

Q: *A driving influence behind CARES was the cost of maintaining unnecessary properties. Given that funding has not followed the plan, how has VA kept up with ongoing maintenance issues and costs?*

A: A good question. It's been able to do an adequate job maintaining those properties. An example is a facility that has many more buildings than are needed. The decision-in-chief may not have been made about the facility. Meanwhile, to prevent the deterioration of those buildings, they need to be heated and cooled. And this hospital complex may have its own fire department, 24-7. That cost goes on. It's a very expensive process.

Q: *Veterans in many CARES-affected communities felt their opinions were not heard or seriously considered in the decision-making process. They were very suspicious when local advisory panel (LAP) meetings*

were suspended in September 2005 in many communities where decisions were still unresolved. How do you see stakeholder involvement evolving in the future of VA construction planning?

A: The overall process is governed by federal law. But I think we have been very robust in trying to reach out and bring various stakeholders into the process. If there are places or instances where they haven't gotten the word, and haven't felt like they were invited to participate, that's regrettable. To say their voices haven't been heard is not accurate. We have paid a lot of attention to the LAPs.

Q: *The Senate released a list of construction projects last fall that included many VA projects identified by CARES, and many that were not. How did those that weren't CARES priorities rise on the list?*

A: This process, or few others in government, aren't totally immune to politics. There are other factors. Safety. Seismic. A surgical suite in Columbia, Mo., that has to get taken care of. A hurricane that took out a hospital in New Orleans and in Mississippi. These have not, in any way, worked in abandonment of the CARES process, the CARES priorities or CARES analysis.

Q: *So CARES remains pretty solid in your mind as a guiding influence?*

A: Yes.

Q: *Now that the original list is 3 years old, is it time to reprioritize?*

A: It's something we always have to look at. If I sit down before a legislative committee, and they say, "Which of these do you prefer? You can't have them all," I have to make a call. We have finite resources to spend on these projects. We do a business-plan analysis, and we do that coincident with the budget process. There is a rational matrix that we put this through.

Q: *Much attention has been given to the Charleston model of collaborative hospital building between VA and affiliated medical schools. How do you see such collaborations influencing the future of VA construction?*

A: I think it could become a very important and useful prototype. Since Gen. (Omar) Bradley occupied this job in 1946, they have been trying to work these collaborations and affiliations with teaching facilities so we could enrich care for veterans. That's the No. 1 priority, and, No. 2, deepen the experience of our VA doctors. It's worked wonderfully. This will take it a step beyond, with some shared infrastructure, shared



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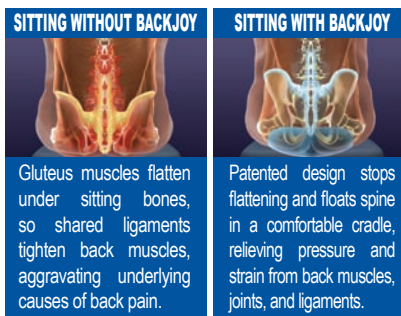
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facilities and shared clinical capabilities to avoid redundancies, but with separate identities.

Q: *What can be done to improve access for veterans who live in remote and rural areas?*

A: I think the best remedy for it is the continued proliferation of community-based outpatient clinics. CBOCs are part of us. They are our family; our people are in them. They have that same common denominator: commitment and affection for veterans. And they are efficient, economical for primary care and for preventative care. And they supplement another new paradigm: tele-health (medical care provided through home-based telephone and video systems). So we get the clinic further out into the community, and then we get another extender, through technology.

Q: *Another area of concern is VA capacity for long-term and mental health care needs. We know from the demographics there is a spike coming in long-term care. And mental health care, with growth of post-traumatic stress disorder among veterans returning from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, is also rising. How well prepared is VA to handle these needs?*

A: You're right. Demographic projections suggest an ever-aging population of veterans. We have now, compared to society at large, a disproportionate number of veterans over 65. An interesting metric is that right now we have 650,000 veterans over age 85. In 10 years, we will have 1.2 million. That portends a whole new set of issues. Again, using technologies that are becoming available to move into the home, where people are – we have found that to be most efficient and most compatible for them.

Q: *Do you see tele-health technology as a better alternative to private contracting?*

A: I think it's the VA paradigm, and it's the preference of veterans, to be in the VA family to the extent possible. That's kind of our planning guideline, to take care of them to the extent we can, ourselves. There are locations and situations, in medical centers and CBOC areas, where if we can't refer an acute veteran need to one of our own medical centers, we put it out into the civilian community for that one procedure, that one issue, at that time. If we are at a site where we have to keep someone in the queue for over 30 days, depending on their level of disability, we'll send

them out to the private sector, on a singular basis. We don't want that to become the norm.

Q: *This year, facility construction has been a high priority on your agenda. Many projects have been advanced, and it looks like the years 2010 to 2013 will have a lot of ribbon cuttings, if funding follows plans. Do you think that then VA facilities will finally catch up?*

A: I'd like to say yes to that. I'm not sure we'll be there that soon. The lead time on these projects is so long. A lot of federal laws and procedures. Anything we get approval for now, at the end of '06, I don't think would realistically be deliverable until probably 2012. These hospitals are huge.

They are complex. It takes a year and a half to two years to do the design, engineering, layout, site planning and site prep. And then you have to build them and fit them. It takes quite a while to bring a hospital on line.

Q: *So VA construction will remain somewhere near the top of the agenda of the VA secretary for decades to come?*

A: Certainly in the near and intermediate term. The hospital stock in the VA system is old. The average age of a VA hospital is over 50 years. The average age of

a hospital in the civilian sector is 12.

Q: *In the near term, how do you see changes in leadership in Congress affecting the future of VA construction planning and execution?*

A: I really don't. The president has instructed the Cabinet – people like me who head these various departments of government – to be prepared to work with the new leadership in the Congress. We know what we need to do, what our principles are, what the goals are. In the case of VA, there is not a great deal of disagreement about support for veterans and support for VA. I don't see it being drastically different. That's optimistic, but that's the way I feel. There is a lot of disagreement about the war, but there isn't a lot of disagreement about the warriors. Our job here is to take care of the warriors, once they take off the uniform. 🌿

Interview: Jeff Stoffer



Noel St. John

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'For the Future of America's Veterans'

Expert panel, supported by five largest U.S. veterans service organizations, to release findings in time for '08 elections.

BY MATT GRILLS

Just five months after The American Legion joined four other veterans service organizations in forming the Veterans Coalition, Inc., members of the National Executive Committee applauded its swift creation of a commission that will look decades into the future to determine the best way to serve U.S. veterans.

"I am happy to report the project is moving along very briskly," said National Commander Paul A. Morin, who opened the annual Fall Meetings in Indianapolis on Oct. 18. He announced that nine commissioners have been appointed to the blue-chip panel, including Past National Commander Ronald F. Conley. National Adjutant Robert Spanogle will serve on the commission's board.

At the helm of the Veterans Coalition is Harry N. Walters, a former VA administrator and Army assistant secretary. Morin introduced him as a "great American, a true patriot, a fellow Legionnaire and a committed veterans advocate."

The coalition's Commission on the Future for America's Veterans is "independent of the federal government and funded outside the federal government by people who can think and create without having a political agenda, or a fixed agenda, or a hidden agenda," Walters told the NEC.

On Nov. 9, commissioners met for the first time to begin developing a long-term, sustainable strategy for veterans health care and benefits programs – a vision currently eclipsed by fractious budget and legislative debates in Congress. A final report will be released by Memorial Day 2008, offering recommendations on how to keep quality high and

LEFT: American Legion National Commander Paul A. Morin addresses the National Executive Committee during the 2006 Fall Meetings in Indianapolis. *James V. Carroll*

costs low in veterans health care even as hundreds of thousands of National Guard and reserve troops prepare to enter an already strained VA system.

"We need to find a future," Walters said. "That's no easy task. And this is not an unambitious project. No one should sit here thinking we're going to come out in 2008 with every solution to every problem. But I can assure you that in 2008 we'll have some ideas."

The commission has approval of VA Secretary Jim Nicholson and members of congressional appropriations committees.

Total Force GI Bill. In addition to pledging further support to the Veterans Coalition project, the NEC adopted three resolutions calling for major enhancements to the Montgomery GI Bill. The proposed "Total Force GI Bill" would both strengthen servicemembers' benefits and address inequities between active-duty military and reservists.

"Since Guardsmen and reservists do the same jobs as active duty when called to active duty, they should have the same benefits after release," said National Economic Commission Chairman James Koutz. "The American Legion's position is that of other advocates: reserve benefits should mirror those of active-duty force."

Along with legislation allowing reservists and National Guard members to use their Montgomery GI Bill benefits for up to 10 years after separation, the NEC's resolutions seek other changes, including eliminating the 10-year delimiting period for eligible veterans and terminating the current military payroll deduction of \$1,200 to enroll.

Flag Amendment. Maj. Gen. Patrick H. Brady, chairman of the Citizens Flag Alliance and Medal of Honor recipient, told the NEC that communication is the key to obtaining the necessary support in the 110th Congress to pass an amendment protecting the U.S. Flag.

"We cannot win this on sentiment," Brady said. "We must educate our folks on the constitutional arguments. The words will win over logical, reasoning people with open minds, but we will never win those people if they believe we are attacking speech and the First Amendment, no matter how much they love the flag." 🌿

Matt Grills is an assistant editor at The American Legion Magazine.

INTERVIEW

Walters: Vet panel to make big impact in '08

Former VA Administrator Harry N. Walters leads an all-star team of experts into some of the most troubling issues facing veterans today. Walters is president of the Veterans Coalition, Inc., and serves as managing member of the newly formed Commission on the Future for



America's Veterans. The commission's work was officially supported by a vote of The American Legion National Executive Committee during the 2006 Fall Meetings in Indianapolis. Its goal is to produce a groundbreaking, veteran-driven report with well-prioritized recommendations looking 15 years into the future.

Scheduled for release in time to guide candidates in the 2008 general election, the report will tackle issues ranging from VA health-care funding to GI Bill benefits to management of the claims backlog.

The panel is also supported by Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, AMVETS and Paralyzed Veterans of America. It includes American Legion Past National Commander Ronald F. Conley; former VA deputy administrator and CARES (Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services) Chairman Everett Alvarez Jr.; past president of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs Raymond Boland; former DAV National Commander Chad Colley; former Office of Management and Budget Deputy Director William M. Diefenderfer III; former VA Under Secretary for Health Kenneth Kizer; former Navy Under Secretary Susan Morrissey Livingstone; Alumni Committee President for the Reserve Forces Policy Board Bryan E. Sharratt; and former staff director for the House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Health Jo Ann Webb.

Walters, who has a non-voting role as manager of the commission, recently spoke with *The American Legion Magazine*.

Q: How will the Commission on the Future for America's Veterans differ from past VA study groups of its kind?

A: Two things about this are unique. One, it's

independent of the federal government. Two, it's funded by the private sector. Certainly, it's the first time that the five largest veterans service organizations have come together to embrace an effort anywhere near this size. So it's historical on that basis. We're going to start working with ideas and get away from political angst.

Q: *How will you strike a balance so your final report isn't too heavy on health care or, alternately, on benefits like the GI Bill?*

A: We have good people who are very experienced in those issues, and I would think that the time would be equally spent. I don't know how we can look at health care without benefits, and vice versa. We have to make sure we keep the 15-year look. We cannot dwell on today's problems. We can reflect on what today's problem will cost if you don't fix it 15 years out, or if you do fix it, we can predict what the savings will be 15 years out. We have an opportunity to be honest. We're going to call them as we see them and let the chips fall where they may.

Q: *What conditions do you think will make Congress and the government receptive to the commission's recommendations?*

A: Well, I think the fact that we're going to announce our recommendations in an election year has a huge implication.

Q: *Are you just going to rely on the nine commissioners for information, or are you going to seek input from outside?*

A: We'll seek input every possible way. We've already contacted academia. We've contacted the corporate world. We need input from the pharmaceutical companies. We need input all the way around from a lot of different folks, including the veterans service organizations, and Congress, and the Congressional Budget Office, and the Office of Management and Budget.

Q: *Is the commission's analysis going to include National Guard and reserve benefits?*

A: Absolutely. As a matter of fact, one of our commissioners (Bryan E. Sharratt) is on there for that specific reason. He's a reservoir of National Guard and reserve background and data. It's a big issue. They range everywhere from 18 to 60. I have a West Pointer at Walter Reed right now, a classmate of my son-in-law who got called up a year ago. He got a sniper bullet in the hip three weeks ago and is now sitting in Walter Reed without a pelvis. His pelvis has been destroyed. He's 42 years old. What are we going to do about 42-year-old guys? This VA medical system is going to be tested from the bottom to the top on age groups.

Q: *Will the commission examine DoD benefits, too?*

A: The DoD medical system is flawed and failing. TRICARE and TRICARE for Life are in the red and are going to get

Learn more about the Commission on the Future for America's Veterans

www.future4vets.org

The following are summaries of key resolutions passed at the National Executive Committee's 2006 Fall Meetings in Indianapolis. For the full text, contact the Legion Library at (317) 630-1366, e-mail library@legion.org or visit www.legion.org. Send a written request for a booklet of all approved resolutions to The Library, The American Legion, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.

AMERICANISM

48 Seeks legislation or presidential proclamation to alter, amend or modify certain provisions of the U.S. Flag Code

CHILDREN & YOUTH

44 Supports the preservation and protection of the institution of marriage through appropriate federal legislation or a constitutional amendment

45 Encourages American Legion posts and departments to work with and support their local Children's Miracle Network-affiliated children's hospitals

ECONOMICS

38 Supports elimination of the 10-year delimiting date for veterans to use Montgomery GI Bill educational benefits, and legislation allowing reservists and National Guard members to use same benefits up to 10 years after separation

39 Supports major enhancements to the Montgomery GI Bill

40 Supports major enhancements to the Selected Reserve Montgomery GI Bill

FINANCE

11 Authorizes agreement with the Alliance Defense Fund and the Legal Liberty Institute to establish and maintain a database of veterans memorials

FOREIGN RELATIONS

41 Urges Congress to increase financial and political support for foreign-exchange education and scholarship programs

42 Urges the president and Congress to control runaway trade deficits by pursuing U.S. claims for fair global trade practices

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

29 Authorizes a recruiting campaign at all levels of The American Legion targeted at eligible military personnel currently serving on active duty, in the reserve components or in the National Guard

32 Calls for department, district, county and local leaders of The American Legion

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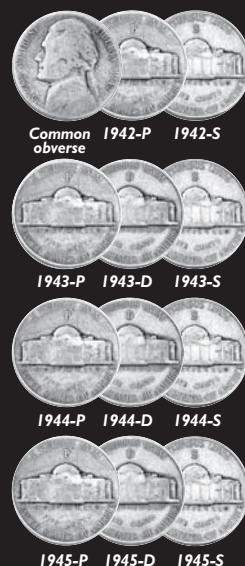
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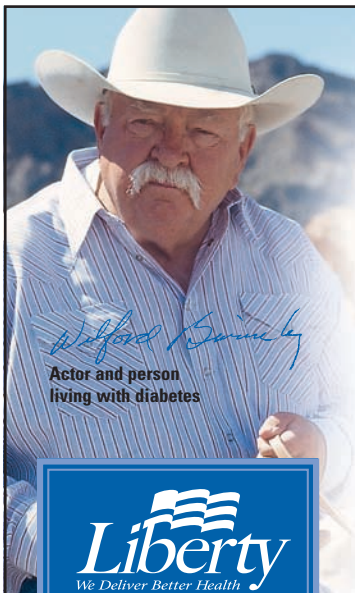
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redder and redder and redder, with huge costs to DoD. We've got to look at DoD health care. What value is it to us? What does it mean to veterans in this country? Should retirees really go to VA rather than TRICARE and TRICARE for Life, which give them no stability? We're going to look at it very, very closely. It's going to be a major issue for the commissioners.

Q: *Will the commission conduct field hearings?*

A: Yes. We're going to have them around the country.

Q: *Will the final report be given to the Republican and Democratic national committees before their conventions?*

A: Absolutely.

Q: *Do you anticipate releasing an interim report?*

A: That's in the air. The commission's going to decide that.

Q: *Do you see the work of past commissions influencing this one, or are you starting with a blank slate?*

A: We're reviewing the notable commissions and task forces. We'll look at CARES again. But we'll look at CARES with a mind toward BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure), so that at the end, when you make the analysis, it *has* to happen. We're going to look at it very carefully. It is conceivable that the President's Task Force (to Improve Health Care Delivery for Our Nation's Veterans, 2003) would reveal what happened and where we are now, and whether or not the commission adopts (its) report would be up to the commission. I'm not predetermining that.

Q: *What do you see as the most prominent issue in VA health care?*

A: Clearly it's the resource issue. We should resource VA, and the resources may come from Medicare. (They) may come from DoD. Maybe DoD is better off paying VA than TRICARE or TRICARE for Life. So we're going to look at the big picture.

Actually, what we're going to do is value VA health care. No one's put a value system on it. And at the end we'll decide whether or not you can market it. We'll be the first ones ever to deal with that issue.

Q: *How important is it that this commission was created by veterans and is officially supported by the five largest veterans organizations?*

A: Remember, it was veterans who united to create the GI Bill of Rights. Veterans designed our current veterans health-care system. It was veterans who erected our war memorials in our nation's capital. And it is veterans who must unite to become shareholders in a system that serves and protects those who have served our country honorably. This commission, with decades of experience in VA, OMB, Congress, DoD, and well-represented and supported by veterans organizations and their 6.1 million members, offers an unprecedented opportunity to deliver a united message at the right time to make a difference for the future. 🌿

to forge a cooperative relationship with American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion

NATIONAL SECURITY

34 Urges the Department of the Army to extend eligibility dates for the Combat Action Badge to include all veterans who have distinguished themselves while exchanging hostile fire with enemies of the United States in wartime, dating back to Dec. 7, 1941

35 Urges the Department of the Navy to once again commission a warship named USS *Ticonderoga*

37 Urges the Department of Defense to allow surviving dependents of uniformed services members, both retired and active, to participate in space-available travel

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

1 Opposes any change in the scheduling of The American Legion national commander's testimony before congressional Veterans Affairs committees

3 Reaffirms support for "surgery by surgeons" concept within VA eye care, ensuring only medically trained surgeons perform invasive eye surgery on veterans

4 Supports legislation granting Filipino World War II veterans equal VA benefits

5 Supports change in Title 38, U.S. Code, to include pension and death pension as exclusions to the minimum active-duty statute

6 Supports establishment and operation of the independently funded and managed Commission on the Future for America's Veterans to analyze current conditions and recommend actions on issues concerning veterans

7 Supports legislation or VA administrative action to improve management of information technology within the Department of Veterans Affairs

10 Authorizes renewal of an agreement with the National Veterans Legal Services Program to provide The American Legion with representation before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, and training for department service officers and others

51 Opposes any legislation that does not include provisions to ensure attorney competence and proficiency in veterans law, along with other safeguards

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Charles D.
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Gordon Jr.



WASHINGTON
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Aging is Natural. Giving Up on Your Sexual Health Isn't!

Bring Back the Best Years of Your Life!
Here's how one man did it!

Although this would otherwise be an embarrassing subject – I feel strongly about sharing a recent experience with others my age.

Simply put ... **I'm 57 years old and even though I'm in overall good health, my body just doesn't respond sexually like it used to.**

Recently, I found myself struggling to "perform". I began losing my confidence and my sex drive with it. I was feeling a great deal of pressure and embarrassment and my wife was beginning to think it was something she did or didn't do – it wasn't.

I wasn't comfortable discussing my situation with anyone – not even my doctor – so in a desperate attempt to find some help, I privately did some research on the web.

First, I found that many HEALTHY men experience a decrease in virility with age. **I wasn't alone!** Good blood circulation is key to maintaining a strong erection and apparently there are a number of factors that can weaken it.

Armed with this new information, I began to search through the many "male enhancement" products on the net. I found a pill for everything and anything but among these various pills and patches – **one product stood out – Maxoderm! Maxoderm is completely different – not a pill or a patch, this surprisingly effective topical formula is delivered directly to the "source", where I need it most.** Best of all Maxoderm is recommended by **Leading Physician, Michael A. Savino, M.D., F.A.C.S.,** but you don't need a prescription to get it. I don't need to swallow a pill, prescription drug or not, or wear some kind of patch on my shoulder.

After trying Maxoderm just once, I could actually feel it working immediately! And it felt incredible! What a difference! I couldn't believe it - virility like I haven't felt in years! My driver's license says I'm 57 but thanks to Maxoderm, my wife says I'm 18 again! It feels great! I now know it's normal to experience some problems with virility at our age but Maxoderm let me deal with it naturally. No pills – no patches – and even better – no embarrassing appointment with the doctor.

Try Maxoderm. You'll feel it working immediately – then you can get back to living your life again.

Jim S.
Miami, FL

*PS., Let your readers know I'm pretty sure they can still get a **FREE MONTH SUPPLY** of MAXODERM their order by calling **1-800-830-6097** or by visiting their website www.maxoderm.com, and **FOR A LIMITED TIME**, you can still get **\$200 worth of FREE GIFTS** with your order that are yours to keep - no questions asked. Oh and even better, their product is backed by a **90 Day Full Money Back Guarantee**. So call now while supplies last - you (and your wife) will be glad you did!

Individual results may vary. These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. The information featured above has been compiled from actual letters we've received from a few of our many satisfied customers. AL0107



**“My Driver's
license says
I'm 57, but my
wife says I'm
18 again!”**



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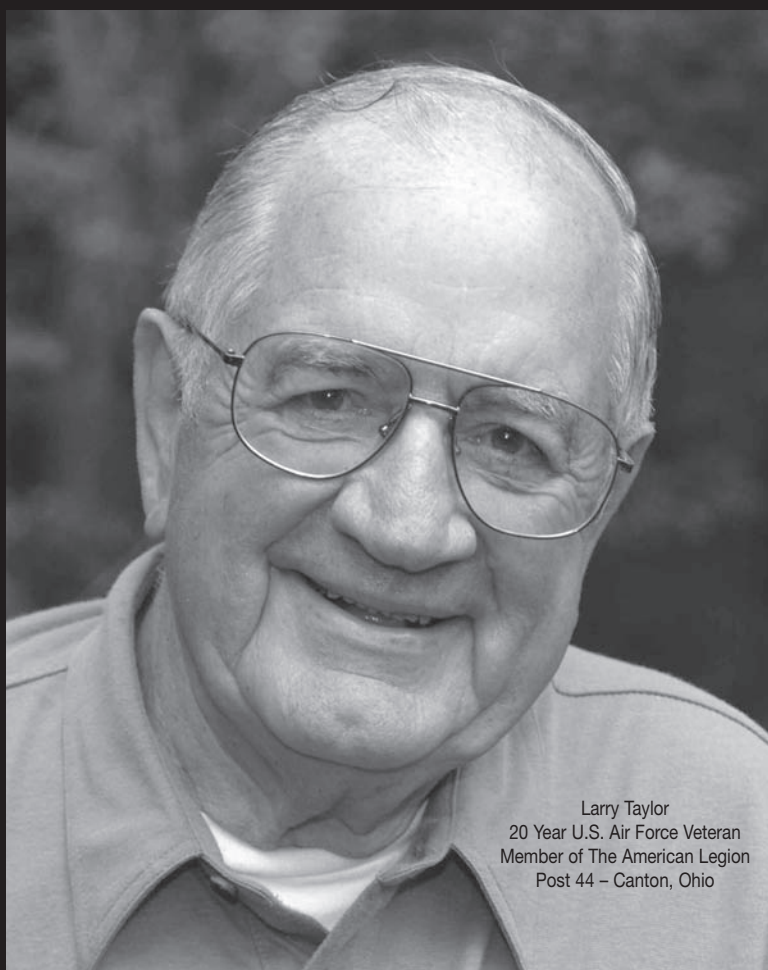
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[STATEMENT]

'We must leave no veteran behind'

Following is an excerpt from a 2006 Veterans Day statement issued by Rep. Lane Evans, D-Ill. A U.S. Marine Corps veteran and longtime champion for veterans benefits, Evans was the ranking Democratic member on the House Veterans Affairs Committee. During his time in Congress, he led legislative efforts to provide VA compensation for veterans exposed to Agent Orange and for the children of exposed veterans, who were born with spina bifida, a crippling birth defect. He fought on behalf of Gulf War veterans, for female veterans and for those suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. A bill sponsor and staunch supporter of mandatory funding for VA health care, he received numerous awards from veterans groups and received a lifetime membership in The American Legion in November, at Post 246 in Moline, Ill. In 1998, Evans announced that he had Parkinson's disease, which ultimately led him to retire eight years later after 12 terms in Congress.



Rep. Lane Evans, D-Ill., was the ranking Democrat on the House Veterans Affairs Committee before Parkinson's disease forced him to retire at the end of the 109th Congress.

As many of you know, I am retiring from Congress. I do so with mixed emotions and fond memories. I am humbled by the outpouring of good wishes from my colleagues, constituents, veterans and friends around the country. I am proud of my efforts on behalf of servicemembers, veterans and military families. However, I fully recognize that any accomplishments were only possible due to the support I received from my brothers and sisters in the veterans community; for this, I am eternally grateful. These friendships, and the encouragement and the strength that came with them, have carried me through significant challenges, both legislative and personal, buoying my spirits and intensifying my resolve to fight for veterans' rights and protections.

[LEGIONNAIRES IN ACTION]



▲ Post 236, Excelsior Springs, Mo. Thanks to the efforts of Legionnaire Gary Reno, Missouri now has a portion of a highway dedicated to remembering the state's POW-MIAs. A 65-mile stretch of Interstate 35 running from a half-mile south of Bethany to a half-mile north of Kearney has been named "the POW-MIA Memorial Highway."

For two years, Reno – a retired U.S. Army sergeant and Vietnam War veteran – raised money, lobbied state lawmakers and worked with the Missouri Department of Transportation for the designation, which finally happened last fall.

"I see this country slipping more and more into forgetting this issue every day," Reno said. "When a young adult asked me what a POW-MIA was, I was shocked beyond belief. I chose to dedicate this 65-mile stretch on Interstate 35 to Missouri's POW-MIAs in hopes that it would spark a grassroots effort, on a state-by-state level, to demand a full accounting. It would be nice to travel any state in this nation and see the same signs."

I am proud of what we have done together, and I look forward to what awaits fruition, including what I believe is the most critical issue affecting veterans: reforming the budget process and providing guaranteed, on-time annual funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs. I strongly believe that the foundation we have laid on this and dozens of other issues will empower those who come after us to carry on the fight to improve the lives of all veterans and their families.

Many challenges lie ahead of us as a nation. None is so great that it should displace the high obligation of taking care of our warriors and their families. We must prepare to care for the new generation of veterans who are engaged in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, too many of whom are suffering traumatic physical and mental injury. We must continue to address the needs of the veterans who served before as well, our contemporaries who, with age, increasingly need long-term care. And we must not fail those who have fallen into the shadows of life, without shelter or a place to turn on the streets of America. Done right, the system we have established for our veterans – the Department of Veterans Affairs and associated government programs, as well as the involvement of every citizen – will assure that no veteran is ignored, overlooked or slighted, whether he or she seeks medical treatment, a place to live, an opportunity to stay productive or an honored place of final rest.

These and other challenges will still be present long after the sun has set on my career in Congress. We must resolve to face them with action, with innovation, with persistence, and with the insistence that they never be subjected to the whims of politics or partisan gain. We must leave no veteran behind. When we do, we are all diminished. While I will not be with you in this cause in the position I have held here in the Congress for 24 years, I will always stand for veterans in the capacities that my health allows.

To my fellow veterans, thank you for your sacrifices. I am honored to have had the opportunity to help give a voice to your concerns in these halls. Be assured you will always hold a place in my heart and memories; know I will continue to carry your message. I am privileged to have served with you and for you, and am proud to call you friends.

Semper Fi.

[LAW]

When in doubt, sue

Last fall, a woman sued Bacardi after someone spilled flaming rum on her in a bar; she claimed the product was defective.

When the fiancé of a Chicago attorney had second thoughts and called off the couple's engagement, the attorney filed suit for pain and suffering and was awarded \$178,000 in damages.

In California, a death-row inmate convicted of killing 16 people sued a journalist for writing a book about him, claiming the book "defamed his good name."

Three out of four members of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists have been sued.

These anecdotes and other findings were recently uncovered by Lawrence McQuillen and Hovannes Abramyan of the Pacific Research Institute. They estimate that the tort system costs the U.S. economy up to \$198 billion a year.

www.pacificresearch.org

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Post 120, Red Bay, Ala. When a squirrel got into a transformer, igniting a fire that burned down the City of Red Bay's municipal building, The American Legion was there to help. Post 120 immediately became home to the city court, DUI training school and police training, including a special session for 75 to 100 law-enforcement officials from northern Alabama. "This is just another way The American Legion and cities can be involved in community projects that better both parties," Post Commander Frankie Smith said.

Post 284, Colonial Heights, Va. On Sept. 17, the entire American Legion family of Post 284 brightened the day of several patients at Hunter Holmes McGuire

VA Medical Center in Richmond. Twenty members of the Southern Virginia Chapter of The American Legion Riders helped host the post's annual McGuire Picnic.

More than 30 volunteers spent three hours cooking and serving 560 hamburgers, 640 hot dogs, 160 pounds of coleslaw and potato salad, and dozens of pies. Teams moved from ward to ward and into the facility's nursing home to deliver food to patients who couldn't enjoy the picnic outside.

The American Legion Riders lined up their custom motorcycles outside the VA facility so patients could view them. They also set up tables and chairs nearby for anyone who wanted to sit down and talk with the Legion Riders.

[VERBATIM]

"The suggestion that only the least educated Americans would agree to serve in the military and fight in Iraq is an insult to every soldier serving in combat, and should deeply offend any American with an ounce of appreciation for what they suffer and risk so that the rest of us can sleep more comfortably at night."

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., responding to the remarks of Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., who told an audience of college students in California that by working hard in school "you can do well. And if you don't, you get stuck in Iraq."

"A fence will slow people down by a minute or two, but if you don't have the agents to stop them it does no good."

T.J. Bonner, president of the National Border Patrol Council, on the bill President Bush signed authorizing 700 miles of new fencing along the U.S.-Mexico border

"Humanity committed a grave error by constructing the Berlin Wall ... today the U.S. is committing a grave error in constructing a wall along our northern border."

Mexican President Felipe Calderon, about the fence

"What is CNN doing running tapes of terrorists shooting Americans? Do you want us to win?"

Lynne Cheney, wife of Vice President Dick Cheney, during an interview with CNN "Situation Room" anchor Wolf Blitzer

"I think Hillary Clinton is a formidable candidate. I think she could win. I hope she doesn't. I disagree with her on nearly all the issues."

Vice President Dick Cheney on the 2008 presidential election

"He has something even more deadly in store for them - we're going to bring them democracy."

Bill Maher, on President Bush saying that the United States has no plans to attack North Korea

[CHILDREN & YOUTH]

Samsung American Legion scholars chosen

Twelve high-school seniors were recently named Samsung American Legion National Scholars. A committee of Samsung, The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary representatives selected the scholars from a national pool of approximately 100 applicants. The pool was comprised of scholarship competition winners from The American Legion Boys State and American Legion Auxiliary Girls State programs. Each recipient earned a \$20,000 undergraduate scholarship.

Funds for the scholarships come from earnings on a \$5 million Samsung endowment. The electronics firm joined with The American Legion in 1995 to offer scholarships to direct descendants of honorably discharged wartime veterans in recognition of the sacrifices of U.S. servicemen and women during the Korean War.

Dong-Jin Oh, president and chief executive officer of Samsung North America, said the scholarship program "is the best way to show our appreciation to the United States and to U.S. war veterans."

The awards are based, in part, on academic performance, financial need, and high school and community involvement. High-school juniors who attend and complete an American Legion Boys State or American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program, and are direct descendants of wartime veterans, are eligible.

Cheri M. Ackerman

Holland Christian High School
Holland, Mich.

Andrew Briggler

Wonderview High School
Hattiesville, Ark.

Heather DeYoung

North Newton Junior-Senior High School
Morocco, Ind.

Jennifer Lynn Erchinger

Caldwell High School
Caldwell, Texas

Stephen Hudson

Seneca Senior High School
Seneca, S.C.

Rebecca Jo Luke

Divernon High School
Divernon, Ill.

Erin Michelle Marvin

Weld Central High School
Keenesburg, Colo.

Joel L. Penning

Lemmon High School
Lemmon, S.D.

Emily Poor

Newington High School
Newington, Conn.

Bryan Paul Stein

Griswold High School
Griswold, Iowa

Kyle Trombley

Rutland High School
Rutland, Vt.

Grace Wilson

Pope John XXIII High School
Sparta, N.J.



Not so fast...

World War II veteran Olen Mitchell of Hutchinson, Kan., was astonished when he received a letter in the mail from VA informing him he had died. He also received a document signed by President Bush honoring his memory and military service.

Travis Morrisse, The Hutchinson News

[GALLERY]

SOARING MEMORIAL

Three stainless-steel spires rise, then arc gracefully away from one another, in the air above Arlington National Cemetery. The design, by the late James Ingo Freed, mimics an aerial precision "bomb-burst" maneuver. At 270 feet and situated on a hillside next to the Navy Annex, with a view both of the Pentagon and the Washington skyline, the new U.S. Air Force Memorial is only eclipsed in height by the Washington Monument and the U.S. Capitol building in the area. Nearly 15 years of planning and \$30 million in private fund-raising went into the overdue monument, dedicated Oct. 14 to the more than 54,000 airmen who have been killed in action.

[BY THE NUMBERS]

Homeland insecurity

80 Percentage of cities that claim not to have received sufficient federal resources for full communications interoperability so first responders can connect with agencies and jurisdictions in the event of natural disaster or terrorism

70 Percentage of cities that report they are not prepared to handle the initial phases of a pandemic flu outbreak without federal assistance

56 Percentage of cities that report they have updated their disaster evacuation plans since the 2005 hurricane season

28 Percentage of cities that have developed cooperative agreements with nearby military bases to supply first responders with equipment and personnel to stabilize their cities in the event of an emergency or disaster

Source: U.S. Conference of Mayors survey of 183 cities in 38 states, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, about how cities of all shapes and sizes are preparing for disasters and acts of terrorism

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[NATIONAL SECURITY]

Star power in China

China's National Defense University recently issued a report on the Chinese military's eagerness to defend its interests in space. "We should strive to develop coordinated land, sea, air and space systems," the report states. The Pentagon has been following China's extraterrestrial ambitions for years. A 2000 U.S. report concluded China was developing jamming equipment to disable GPS receivers, micro-satellites to latch on to satellites and destroy them, and lasers to blind U.S. orbiters. The Pentagon's 2006 annual report to Congress focused on Beijing's development and integration of photo-reconnaissance and communications satellites and space-based systems designed for command and control.

[ACTIVE DUTY]

Sea power

In the largest joint exercise in recent U.S. military history, three carrier strike groups steamed in formation near Guam last summer.

The USS *Ronald Reagan*, the USS *Kitty Hawk* and the USS *Abraham Lincoln* led the "Valiant Shield" exercise, which included 28 naval vessels, nearly 300 aircraft and more than 22,000 Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard personnel.

U.S. Navy/Todd P. Cichonowicz



[LEGION COLLEGE]

Close-captioned national meetings a product of Legion College grad

The American Legion National College provides Legionnaires an intense week of leadership training. For Michigan Legionnaire Brett Holt, right, who is deaf and uses a cochlear implant to hear, it provided something more.

The 2006 Legion College class split into working groups to analyze specific American Legion posts and determine their needs. Each group also developed a resolution and attempted to pass it through a team that consisted of National Commander Paul A. Morin, National Americanism and Chil-



dren & Youth Director Marty Justis and National Librarian Joe Hovish.

Holt, 44, suggested a resolution calling for the proceedings of The American Legion National Convention and other national meetings to be close-captioned on a viewing screen for hearing-impaired members. The group made its presentation Nov. 2. At a banquet that evening, Morin told the class that Holt's suggestion would be reality at the 2007 National Convention in Reno, Nev.

"This will really benefit some of our disabled members," said Holt, a member of Post 314 in Shields, Mich. "I think it's a fantastic thing for this organization."

Enrollment criteria

Qualified Legion College candidates must be Panama, Grenada, Gulf War, Afghanistan or Iraq war-era veterans with at least two years of American Legion membership. They must demonstrate leadership potential and have successfully completed The American Legion Extension Institute.

www.legion.org

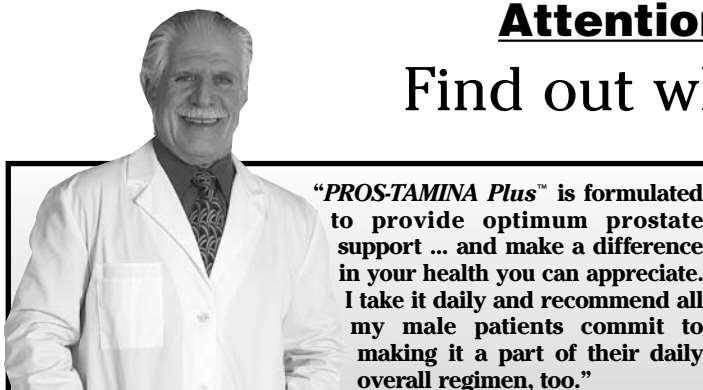
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Mechanical healing

New technology changes the face of stroke recovery.

BY DR. JOEL KUPERSMITH

Robots, electrodes and computer games are all part of a growing role for advanced technology in stroke rehabilitation.

Strokes occur when the blood supply to the brain is blocked, usually because of a clogged artery.

More than 600,000 Americans – two-thirds of them elderly – suffer a stroke each year. Most patients survive, albeit with lingering disabilities.

These chronic health problems can include partial paralysis, as well as impaired speech, swallowing, vision or memory. Until recently, patients recovering from a stroke would receive only traditional physical therapy, with tools such as stationary bicycles or elastic bands. While that approach still accounts for most post-stroke therapy, some new methods are proving successful and gradually making their way into rehabilitation clinics.

Under way at four VA medical centers is a study involving a robot called the MIT-Manus, developed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The devices have yielded impressive results in a few small studies and are now being put to the test with 158 veterans. Patients sit at a table with their affected arms attached to the robot. They follow prompts on a computer screen – or instructions from a therapist – and try to move their arms to perform tasks. The robot senses their movement and helps only as much as needed. One researcher described it as “power steering” for the arms.

The therapy is not unlike what human therapists do when they ask patients to move an affected limb and then assist as required. Robots offer therapy of far greater intensity and duration.

Another high-tech method for aiding movement is functional neuromuscular stimulation, or FNS. Electrodes, temporarily implanted in weak or paralyzed muscles, are wired to an external controller. Electrical stimulation substitutes for the body’s own brain-to-muscle impulses and appears to eventually help restore natural movement.

In a study at the Cleveland VA Medical Center and Case Western Reserve University, 32 men and women who suffered a stroke more than a year

earlier were treated with an individualized regimen of well-established stroke therapies. Half the patients also received FNS. After 12 weeks, the FNS patients showed significantly greater improvements in their walking ability.

Computers play an even more pivotal role in a therapy being developed by Dr. Edward Taub at the Birmingham VA Medical Center and University of Alabama. Nearly 20 years ago, he pioneered constraint-induced therapy, in which stroke patients wear restraints on their “good” arms during therapy sessions and are thus forced to use their affected arms. Now, Taub’s team has designed an automated

computer-based system to achieve the same effects without as much hands-on work by therapists. The videogame-like system coaches patients through various tasks, tracking their progress and offering motivational messages. The next goal is to test whether patients can use the system at home, with monitoring from therapists via the Internet.

Joel Kupersmith, M.D., is chief research and development officer for the Veterans Health Administration.

This article is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their physicians when they have health problems.



The Rutgers Master Glove measures the range of movement for fingertip position and provides computer-controlled resistance for hands. Such measured resistance is used in physical therapy for stroke victims. AP

[BENEFITS]

New study on Lou Gehrig's disease leads call for presumptive VA benefits

A recent study by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) has concluded that there is "a limited and suggestive association between the development of ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) and military service."

At the request of VA, the IOM examined the few existing peer-reviewed studies on ALS – Lou Gehrig's disease – in the veteran population to ascertain if an association exists. ALS is a rare and fatal neurological degenerative disease with no known cause or cure.

"Although more research needs to be conducted to identify possible military-related risk factors that cause ALS in veterans, the IOM's determination that there is suggestive evidence of an association paves a path for VA to make benefits available on a presumptive basis," American Legion National Commander Paul A. Morin said.

A 2005 Harvard University study indicated people with military service were more likely to have died from ALS than those with no prior military service. "Even studies conducted within the veteran population have indicated that war veterans may have a greater chance of developing ALS," Morin added. "The American Legion is hopeful that IOM's conclusions will guide researchers in identifying risk factors that make servicemembers more susceptible to this horrific disease."

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Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are published free of charge.

Due to the large number of reunions, **The American Legion Magazine** will publish a group's listing only once a year. Notices should be sent at least six months prior to the reunion to ensure timely publication.

Other Notices

"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim. Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name,

telephone number and e-mail address. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280 or e-mail reunions@legion.org.

The magazine will not publish the names of individuals, only the name of the unit from which you seek people. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life memberships by their posts. **This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership.** Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**.

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parting shots|

If you lined up all the cars in the world end to end, someone would be stupid enough to try to pass them, five or six at a time, on a hill, in the fog.

A WOMAN WALKED BY a shriveled old man rocking in a chair on his front porch. "I can't help but notice how happy you look," she said. "What's your secret for a long happy life?"

"I smoke three packs of cigarettes a day," he said. "I also drink a case of whiskey a week, eat fatty foods and never exercise!"

"That's amazing. How old are you?"

The old man thought for a moment, and then replied, "36."

THE PROSPECTIVE FATHER-IN-LAW asked his daughter's fiancé, "Young man, are you able to support a family?"

The surprised groom-to-be replied, "Well, no. I was just planning to support your daughter. The rest of you will have to fend for yourselves."

ONE DARK NIGHT a New York cabbie picked up a passenger. When the man tapped the driver on the shoulder to ask him a question, the cabbie screamed, lost control of the car and nearly hit a bus. The cab was silent for a moment, and then the driver said, "Look, friend, don't ever do that again. You scared the daylights out of me!"

The passenger apologized, saying he didn't know such a light tap would scare him so much. After a moment, the driver replied, "Sorry. It's not really your fault. Today is my first day as a cab driver. I've been driving hearses for the past 25 years."



"Memo: Cost-saving measure – replace all 'yes men' with bobbleheads."

WHEN JEFFERSON WROTE that we had a government of the people, by the people and for the people, he apparently was talking about who was going to pick up the tab.

A MAN SPED down the highway, feeling secure in a group of cars all traveling at the same speed. However, when he passed a patrol car, it pulled out behind him, lights flashing.

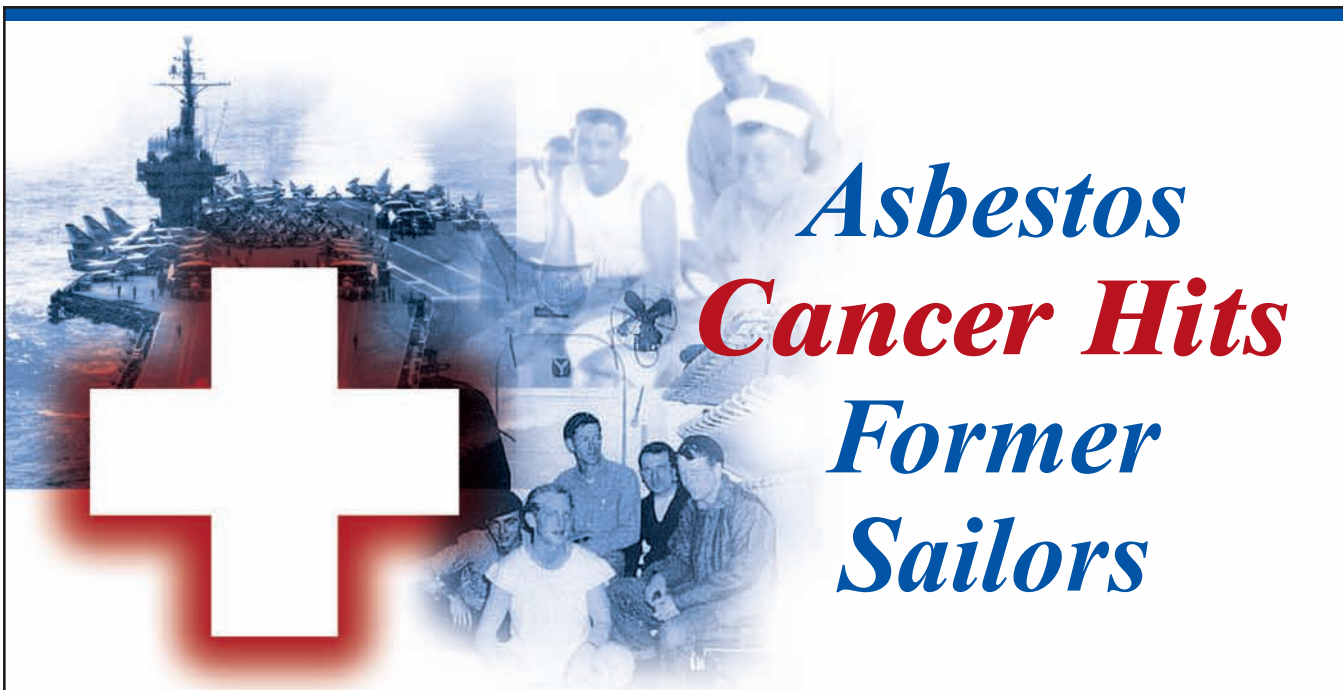
The police officer handed him a citation, took the driver's signature and was starting to walk away when the man said, "Officer, I know I was speeding, but I don't think it's fair. Plenty of other drivers around me were going just as fast. Why did I get a ticket?"

"Ever go fishing?" the policeman asked.

"Um, yeah ..." the startled man replied.

"Ever catch all the fish?"





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